

ST. NICHOLAS.

VOL. XX.

DECEMBER, 1892.

No. 2.



The SOLDIERING of BENIAH STIDHAM.

BY HOWARD PYLE.

WHEN you look at a very old man, it seems hard to imagine that he was ever once a boy, full of sport and mischief like the boys whom we know nowadays.

There is a daguerreotype of Beniah Stidham that was taken about the year 1850. It is the picture of a very, very old man, with a bald, bony forehead, and a face full of wrinkles and furrows. His lips are sucked in between his toothless gums, and his nose is hooked down as though to meet his lean chin beneath.

In the picture he wears a swallow-tailed coat

with a rolling collar and with buttons that look like brass. The cuffs of his long, wrinkled coat-sleeves come down almost to the knotted knuckles, and one skinny hand rests upon the top of a hooked cane. It does not seem possible that he could ever have been a boy; but he was—though it was away back in the time of the Revolutionary War.

He was about fifteen years old at the time of the battle of Brandywine—that was in the year 1777. He was then an apprentice in Mr. Connelly's cooper-shops near Brandywine. His father, Amos Stidham, kept a tin-store, and sometimes peddled tinware and buckets down

Copyright, 1892, by THE CENTURY CO. All rights reserved.

in the lower counties and up through Pennsylvania. At that time Beniah was a big, awkward, loose-jointed, over-grown lad; he shot up like a weed, and his clothes were always too small for him. His hands stuck far out from his sleeves. They were splay and red, and they were big like his feet. He stuttered when he talked, and everybody laughed at him for it.

Most people thought that he was slack-witted, but he was not; he was only very shy and timid. Sometimes he himself felt that he had as good sense as anybody if he only had a chance to show it.

These things happened in Delaware, which in those days was almost like a part of Pennsylvania.

There was a great deal of excitement in Wilmington at the time of the beginning of the trouble in Boston, the fight at Lexington, and the battle at Bunker Hill. There were enlisted for the war more than twenty young fellows from Wilmington and Brandywine Hundred; they used to drill every evening in a field at the foot of Quaker Hill, where the Meeting-house stood and not far from the William Penn Inn. A good many people—especially the boys—used to go in the evening to see them drill. It seemed to Beniah that if he could only go for a soldier he might stand a great deal better chance of getting along than he had in Wilmington, where every one laughed at him and seemed to think that he was lacking in wits.

He had it in his mind a great many times to speak to his father about going for a soldier, but he could not quite find courage to do so, for he felt almost sure that he would be laughed at.

One night he did manage to speak of it, and

when he did, it was just as he thought it would be. It was just after supper, and they still sat at table, in the kitchen. He was nervous, and when he began speaking he stuttered more than usual.

"I wo-wo-wo-wo-wish you'd l-let me go fer a sis-sis-sis-sis-sis-sis-soldier, Father," said he.

His sister Debby burst out laughing.

"A sis-sis-sis-sis-soldier!" she mocked.

"A what!" said Beniah's father. "You a soldier? You would make a pretty soldier, now, would n't

you? Why, you would n't be able to say 'Who goes there?' fer stutterin'!" and then Debby laughed again, and when she saw that it made Beniah angry, she laughed still more.

So Beniah did not go soldiering that time.

After the battle of Brandywine, Lord Howe's fleet of war-ships came up into the Delaware from the Chesapeake Bay, and everybody was anxious and troubled, for there was talk that the enemy would bombard the town. You could see the fleet coming up the bay from the hills back of the town—the sails seemed to cover the water all over; that was in the afternoon, just before supper. That evening a good many people left town, and others sent their china and silver up into the country for safe keeping.

After supper the bellman went through the streets calling a meeting at the Town-hall. Captain Stapler was at home at that time and spoke to the people. He told them that there was no danger of the fleet bombarding the town, for the river was two miles away, and the cannon could not carry that far. He showed them that the only way that the enemy could approach the town was up the Christiana River, and that if the citizens would build a



redoubt at the head of the marsh the place would be perfectly defended.

The people found a good deal of comfort in what he said; but the next morning the "Roebuck" and "Liverpool" ships of war were seen to be lying, with their tenders and two transports, opposite the town; and once more all the talk was that they were going to bombard.

There was a great deal said that morning at the cooper-shops about all this. Some opined that the ships were certainly going to bombard, but others held that what they would do would be to send a regiment of Hessians up the creek to burn down the town.

During the morning, old Billy Jester came up from Christiana village, and said that the townspeople were building a mud fort down at the Rocks below the Old Swedes' Church, and that they expected two cannon and some soldiers to come down from Fort Mifflin in the afternoon.

This was a great comfort to everybody, for the time.

About eleven o'clock in the morning the enemy suddenly began firing. Boom! — the sudden startling noise sounded dull and heavy, like the falling of some great weight; the win-

dows rattled—boom!—boom!—boom!—and then again, after a little pause,—boom!—boom! There was a little while, a few seconds of breathless listening, and then Tom Pierson, the foreman of the shop, shouted:

"By gum! they're bombarding the town!"

Then he dropped his adze, and ran out of the door without waiting to take his hat. As he ran, there sounded again the same dull, heavy report—boom! boom!

There was no more work in the cooper-shops that day. Beniah ran all the way home. His father was just then away in the lower counties, and Beniah did not know what was going to happen to Debby and his mother. Maybe he would find the house all knocked to pieces with cannon-balls. Boom! boom! sounded

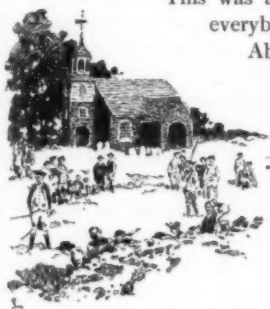
the cannon again, and Beniah ran faster and faster, his mouth all dry and clammy with fear and excitement. The streets were full of people hurrying toward the hills. When he got home he found that no harm had happened, but the house was shut and all the doors locked. He met Mrs. Frist, and she told him that his mother and Debby had gone up to Quaker Hill.

He found them there a little while later, but by that time the war-ships had stopped firing, and after a while everybody went back home.

In the afternoon it was known that they had not been firing at the town at all, but at some people who had gone down on the neck to look at them, and whom, no doubt, they took to be militia or something of the kind.

Just before supper it was reported that one of Jonas Stidham's cows had been killed by a cannon-ball. Jonas Stidham was Beniah's uncle, and in the evening he went over to look at the cow. He met several others going on the same errand—two men and three or four boys. There was quite a crowd gathered about the place. The cow lay on its side, with its neck stretched out. There was a great hole in its side, made by the cannon-ball, and there was blood upon the ground. It looked very dreadful, and seemed to bring the terrors of war very near; and everybody stood about and talked in low voices.

After he had seen the dead cow, Beniah went down to where they were building the mud fort. They were just putting the cannon into place, and Captain Stapler was drilling a company of young men of the town who had enlisted for its defense. Beniah wished that he was



one of them. After the drill was over, Captain Stapler came up to him and said:

"Don't you want to enlist, Beniah?"

Beniah would not have dared to enlist if



his father had been at home, but his father was away, and he signed his name to the roll-book!

That was the way that he came to go soldiering.

That night Beniah did not go home, for he had to stay with the others who had enlisted. They were quartered at the barn just back of the mud fort. But he sent word by Jimmy Rogers that he was not coming home, because he had enlisted in Captain Stapler's company.

However, Captain Stapler let him go home the next morning for a little while. He found that all the boys knew that he had enlisted, and that he was great among them. He had to tell each one he met all about the matter. They all went along with him—fifteen

or twenty of them—and waited in the street outside while he was talking with his family within. His mother had gone out, but his sister Debby was in the kitchen.

"Oh, but you 'll catch it when daddy comes home!" said she.

Beniah pretended not to pay any attention to her.

"When is he coming home?" said he, after a while.

"I don't know, but, mark my words, you 'll catch it when he does come," said Debby.

That night they set pickets along the edge of the marsh, and then Beniah really began to soldier. He took his turn at standing guard about nine o'clock. There was no wind, but the night was very raw and chill. At first Beniah rather liked the excitement of it, but by and by he began to get very cold. He remembered his father's overcoat that hung back of the door in the entry, and he wished he had brought it with him from home; but it was too late to wish for that now. And then it was very lonesome and silent in the darkness of the night. A mist hung all over the marsh, and in the still air the voices of the men who were working upon the redoubt by lantern-light, and of the volunteers at their quarters in the barn where they had kindled a fire, sounded with perfect clearness and distinctness in the stillness. The tide was coming in, and the water gurgled and rippled in the ditches, where the reeds stood stark and stiff in the gloom. The reed-birds had not yet flown south, and their sleepy "cheep, cheeping" sounded incessantly through the darkness.

The moon was about rising, and the sky, to the east, was lit with a milky paleness. Toward it the marsh stretched away into the distance, the thin tops of the nearer reeds just showing above the white mysterious veil of mist that covered the water. It was all very strange and lonesome, and when Beniah thought of home and how nice it would be to be in his warm bed, he could not help wishing that he had not enlisted. And then he certainly would "catch it" when his father came home, as Debby had said he would. It was not a pleasant prospect.

By and by the moon rose, and at the same time a breeze sprang up. It grew colder than ever, and presently the water began to splash and dash against the river-bank beyond. The veil of mist disappeared, and the water darkled and flashed with broken shadows and sparks of light. Beniah's fingers holding the musket felt numb and dead. He wondered how much longer he would have to stay on guard; he felt as though he had been there a long time already.



He crouched down under the lee of the river-bank and in the corner of a fence which stood there to keep the cows off of the marsh.

He had been there maybe five minutes, and was growing very sleepy with the cold, when he suddenly heard a sharp sound, and instantly started wide awake. It was the sound as of an oar striking against the side of a boat. There was something very strange in the sharp rap ringing through the stillness, and whoever had made it had evidently not intended to do so, for the after stillness was unbroken.

Beniah crouched in the fence-corner, listening breathlessly, intensely. He had forgotten all about being cold and sleepy and miserable. He felt that his heart was beating and leaping unevenly, and his breath came quickly, as though he had been running. Was the enemy coming? What should he do?

He did not move; he only crouched there, trying to hold his breath, and trying to still the beating of his heart with his elbow pressed against his ribs. He was afraid that if there was another sound he might miss hearing it because of his labored breathing and the pulses humming in his ears. He gripped his musket with straining fingers.

There was a pause of perfect stillness. Then suddenly he heard a faint splash as though some one had stepped incautiously into the water. Again there was stillness. Then something moved in the reeds—maybe it was a regiment of Hessians! Beniah crouched lower, and poked his musket through the bars of the fence. What would happen next? He wondered if it was all real—if the enemy was actually coming.

Suddenly the reeds stirred again. Beniah crouched down still lower. Then he saw something slowly rise above the edge of the river-bank, sharp-cut and black against the milky sky. It was the head of a man, and it was surmounted by a tall conical cap—it was the sort of a cap that the British soldiers wore. As Beniah gazed, it seemed to him as though he had now stopped breathing altogether. The head remained there motionless for a while, as though listening; then the body that belonged to it slowly rose as though from the earth, and stood, from the waist up black against the sky.

Beniah tried to say, "Who goes there?" and then he found that what his father had said was true; he could not say the words for stuttering. He was so excited that he could not utter a sound; he would have to shoot without saying, "Who goes there?" There was nothing else to do. He aimed his eye along the barrel of his musket, but it was so dark that he could not see the sights of the gun very well. Should he shoot? He hesitated for an intense second or two—then came a blinding flash of resolve.

He drew the trigger.

Bang!

For a moment he was deafened and bewildered by the report and the blinding flash of light. Then the cloud of pungent gunpowder-smoke drifted away, and his senses came back to him. The head and body were gone from against the sky.

Beniah sprang to his feet and flew back toward the mud fort, yelling he knew not what. It seemed as though the whole night was peopled with enemies. But nobody followed him. Suddenly he stopped in his flight, and stood again listening. Were the British following



him? No, they were not. He heard alarmed voices from the fort, and the shouting of the pickets. A strange impulse seized him that he could not resist: he felt that he must go back and see what he had shot. He turned and crept slowly back, step by step, pausing now and then, and listening intently. By and by he came to where the figure had stood, and, craning his neck, peeped cautiously over the river-

bank. The moon shone bright on the rippling water in a little open place in the reeds. There was something black lying in the water, and as Beniah continued looking at it, he saw it move with a wallowing splash. Then he ran away shouting and yelling.

Captain Stapler thought that an attack would surely be made, but it was not; and, after a while, he ordered a company from the mud fort out along the river-bank, to see who it was that Beniah had shot. They took a lantern along with them, and Beniah went ahead to show them where it was.

"Yonder 's the place," said he; "and I fu-fired my gi-gi-gi-gun from the fa-fa-fence, ja-just here."

Captain Stapler peered down among the reeds. "By gum!" said he, "he 's shot something, sure enough." He went cautiously down the bank; then hestopped over, and soon lifted something that lay in the water. Thenthere was a groan.



"Come down here, two or three of you!" called out Captain Stapler. "Beniah 's actually shot a man, as sure as life!"

A number of the men scrambled down the bank; they lifted the black figure; it groaned again as they did so. They carried it up and laid it down upon the top of the bank. The clothes were very muddy and wet, but the light of the lantern twinkled here and there upon the buttons and braid of a uniform. Captain Stapler bent over the wounded man. "By gracious!" said he, "it 's a Hessian—like enough he 's a spy." Beniah saw that the blood was running over one side of the wet uniform, and he was filled with a sort of terrible triumph. They carried the wounded man to the barn, and Dr. Taylor came and looked at him. The

wound was in the neck, and it was not especially dangerous. No doubt the man had been stunned by the ball when it struck him.

The Hessian was a young man. "*Sprechen sie Deutsch?*" asked he, but nobody understood him.

The next morning Beniah's father came home. He did not stop to ungear the horse, but drove straight down to the mud fort in his tinware cart. He was very angry.

"What 're you doing here, anyhow?" said he to Beniah; and he caught him by the collar and shook him till Beniah's hat slipped down over one eye. "What 're you doin' here, anyhow—killin' and shootin' and murderin' folks? You come home with me, Beniah—you come home with me!" and he shook him again.

"He can't go," said Captain Stapler. "You can't take him, Amos. He 's enlisted, and he 's signed his name up on the roll-book." "I don't care a rap what he 's signed," said Amos.

"He hain't goin' to stay here shootin' folks. He 's got to come home along with me, he has." And Beniah went.

Nobody knows what happened after he got home, and Beniah did not tell; but next day he went back to work at the cooper-shops again. All the boys seemed glad to see him, and wanted to know just how he shot the Hessian.

A good many people visited the wounded Hessian down in the barn the day he had been shot. Among others came "Dutch Charlie," the cobbler. He could understand what the Hessian said. He told Captain Stapler that the man was not a spy, but a deserter from the transport-ship in the river. It seemed almost a pity that the man had not been a spy; but, after all, it did not make any great difference in

the way people looked on what Beniah Stidham had done; for the fact remained that he was a Hessian. And nobody thought of laughing at Beniah, even when he stuttered in telling how he shot him.

After a while the Hessian got well, and then he started a store in Philadelphia. He did well,

and made money, and the queerest part of the whole business was that he married Debby Stidham—in spite of its having been Beniah who shot him in the neck.

This is the story of Beniah Stidham's soldiering. It lasted only two nights and a day, but he got a great deal of glory by it.



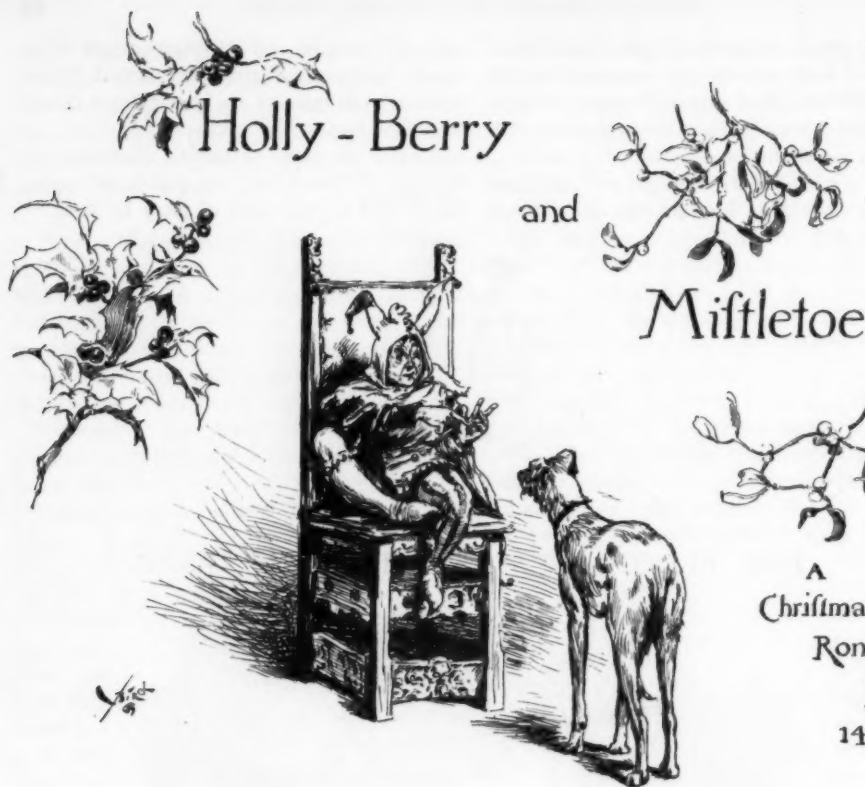
THE BLOOM OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

BY MARY MAPES DODGE.

At night we planted the Christmas tree
In the pretty home, all secretly;
All secretly, though merry of heart,
With many a whisper, many a start.
(For children who 'd scorn to make believe
May not sleep soundly on Christmas Eve.)

And then the tree began to bloom,
Filling with beauty the conscious room.
The branches curved in a perfect poise,
Laden with wonders that men call "toys,"
Blooming and ripening (and still no noise),
Until we merry folk stole away
To rest and dream till dawn of day.

In the morning the world was a girl and a boy,
The universe only their shouts of joy,
Till every branch and bough had bent
To yield the treasure the Christ-child sent.
And then—and then—the children flew
Into our arms, as children do,
And whispered, over and over again,
That oldest, newest, sweetest refrain,
"I love you! I love you! Yes, I love you!"
And hugged and scrambled, as children do.
And we said in our hearts, all secretly:
"*This* is the bloom of the Christmas tree!"



BY M. CARRIE HYDE.

I.

THE EXEUNT.

"Lost! Lost! Lost! Ah, woe is me!
Sir Charles's home will vacant be."

So dirged Holly-berry, his twinkling eyes upon his master, who sat like a man of stone, in a high-backed chair near a table, on which was a side of venison, untasted, a mug of home-brew, untouched.

"Get you to Limbo, you brainless jester!" roared Sir Charles Charlock, starting up in his chair at the sound of Hollyberry's piping voice, and bringing down his fist upon the table with a bang that set the dishes to dancing, and the glasses into a tinkling shiver. "You are the maddest madcap I have e'er beheld; let me not see you again this night!"

Holly-berry drew down one point of his comical cap till it touched his chin, winked his eye merrily at Sir Charles Charlock, which was fifteenth century for "That 's all right," turned a somersault down the length of the room toward the doorway, through which he disappeared with a cart-wheel, topped off with a hand-spring, that took the scarlet-dressed, white polka-dotted little jester off the scene with pyrotechnic effect.

He was well contented. He had roused his loved master out of his fit of dense gloom to utter the first words he had spoken that day.

A large staghound, which had been resting his head on his fore paws before the roaring logs in the fireplace, slowly got up from his sleeping-place, and, with a low whine, crept to Sir Charlock, and, laying his nose on his master's

knee, looked up into his gloomy face with grief-speaking eyes.

"Away with you also!" cried Sir Charles. "T is worse than the jester's dirging to have your eyes so sorrowingly hold me to account"; and at a threat of his high-booted foot, the staghound slunk away through the hall door.

"Mind it not," said Holly-berry, stroking the hound's long ears. "T is far better he should be holding high carnival with his toes, than to sit there as sodden as unyeasted bread. Perchance, Mistress Bertha, you may bring him to his feet in a better spirit, if *you* but try it."

Bertha shrank. She was a winsome Saxon maid, who but two months before had so roused her father's wrath by confessing her attachment to Sir Egbert Traymore of Twin Towers, that she felt as if offering herself for slaughter, if she approached the angry father now; still, she went.

"Father," she said, entering the room through a door to which his back was turned, and going toward him with halting step, "Ethelred may yet be found; this is but the third day of his absence. Eat, and then can you better think where next to search for him."

"Silly maid, begone with your prating. Is it not you who first brought trouble upon us, with your friend Egbert Traymore? As if a feud, mellowing three hundred years 'twixt Traymores and Charlocks, were not enough to silence you whenever you would say 'Egbert'! What boots it, if one has an enmity for ten generations and keeps not to it? Begone, with your soft words, your prattling ways and baby face." And, rising, Sir Charles frowned upon her so sternly that in her haste to leave him, she stumbled along the floor, swayed, then regained herself, and disappeared through the door as quickly as had either Holly-berry or the hound.

"T is no use!" she exclaimed, and she ran up-stairs weeping, while her father threw himself upon a deerskin-covered bench, and lay perfectly still.

"By my cap and bells, that is bad!" said Holly-berry, peering in through the door-crack, troubled by the complete silence; while the staghound wedged the door still further open

with his long nose, and going into the room, lay so quietly down upon the floor beside the bench that Sir Charles did not know he was there.

"By his spear and cross-bow!" said Holly-berry to himself, "this is worse than ever, to see him there lying like that! I must stir my wits, to see what can be done," and he laid his finger against his nose, in deep reflection, just as the scuffling of heavy boots, the clanking of long swords, and the smoking of flambeaux, in the broad oak hall, announced the arrival of the last searching-party; but they had returned as fruitlessly as they had come in three times in the last three days.

"T is no use," they said dejectedly; "lad Ethelred, alive or dead, is not to be found within thirty miles of Charlock Castle."

The staghound raised his head and howled dolorously.

"Zounds!" cried Sir Charles Charlock, "I have a mind to hang some witch to-morrow,—for surely this mystery is of such brewing."

And this was upon the nineteenth day of December, 1492, when Henry VII. of England wore a white and red rose in his buttonhole, and watched with pride the progress of his son, baby Henry VIII., in walking and talking; when Charles VIII. of France was crossing swords with Germany, because he had not married to its satisfaction; and when Ferdinand and Isabella sat upon the throne of Spain, and wondered if Columbus would return, and if his "new world" were worth the queen's necklace and diamonds.

II. MISTLETOE.

Ah! Dame Mistletoe, where, tell me where,
Can be found our young master, Lord Charlock's heir.

HOLLY-BERRY drew farther back into the corner. He did not wish to be seen when so deeply reflecting, because for Holly-berry to be seen anywhere was for him to be expected to go off in a whirl of acrobatics, or to be placed on a bench, or a table, or some other high point, and asked for a joke, a riddle, or a bit of fun from his busy brain.

Yet Holly-berry could be sober and in earnest, as he was this evening; for his good little heart, grieving for the sorrow in the household,

was helping his bright little brains to *think*—to think *hard*.

He laid the five points of the case, upon the fingers of his left hand. The first point, which

Point fifth was the most troublesome. It was a hard knot, he told himself, and he clinched his wits upon it, for fifteen minutes—a half-hour, until, indeed, the searching-party had dis-



"SIR CHARLES SAT LIKE A MAN OF STONE."

he tried to fix upon his thumb, was that Ethelred Charlock, aged nine years, only son and heir of Sir Charles Charlock, the pride of his father's heart, the light of his mother's eyes, the delight of his sister's life, and the pet of the household, was *lost*.

The second point, and he laid the dexter index finger upon the sinister index finger emphatically, was, that Ethelred *must* be found.

Point third was, *how* to find him.

Point fourth was, to get about it at once.

Point fifth was, *how* to get about it at once.

banded and retired, leaving him alone in the broad hall. Then the idea came. He sprang nimbly to his feet.

"I will go and ask Mistletoe what to do," he said. And throwing a cloak over his shoulders, he stole softly out into the lonely, cold, moonlit night. It was a white night, too, for a snow had fallen during the day, and lay like royal ermine upon the turrets and towers of Charlock Castle, like a ruching of swan's-down upon the square-cut battlements, the garden-hedges, and the limbs of the trees.

The moon, but a crescent, peered through the tops of the trees, decorating the white snow with shadow-etchings of the branches, the bushes, and the dense evergreens.

Holly-berry whistled under his breath at the weird beauty of the night, omitted his customary hand-spring, and, taking his cap in his hand, for fear the jingle of the little bells around its edge would draw attention to him, ran briskly down the path to the road, down the road half a mile to a dense grove in which some deer were grazing upon the bush-tops; then, turning abruptly to the east, he hurried along under the trees, and at length, quite out of breath, found himself nearing a group of three fine large oaks, as alike as the stars in Orion's belt, their branches draped with mistletoe, intermingling affectionately in a rustic bower above a little cottage. So small and obscure was the cottage that it might readily have been passed unnoticed by a wayfarer.

Still it showed no want of actual comfort; it was as tautly built as the sides of a sailing vessel, the roof was warmly thatched, while both firelight and candlelight met the moonlight, between the neat dimity curtains looped back from the one narrow window, upon its front.

Holly-berry tapped gently upon the green-painted door and called:

"Halloo, Dame Mistletoe, are you within?"

"Where else should I be, Holly child?" she replied, opening the door, "and come you in also. Right glad am I to see you, and hear news from the castle yonder."

Kicking his long, pointed shoes against the door-sill, to remove every particle of snow from them, Holly-berry entered and took a seat upon the bench she placed for him before the crackling fire.

"Where is your nimble tongue?" she asked, vainly waiting for Holly-berry to speak first, "and where the sprig of holly-berry you al-

way wear so gaily at your belt? I fear it betokens ill luck to see you without it"; and she took a seat opposite him.

"It *is* ill luck, then, dear Dame Mistletoe," answered the little jester slowly. "You have hit it at once. Our young Ethelred, of Charlock castle, has been lost, and though this be the third day of his missing, not one word has been learned of his whereabouts. His father is daft with grief; his mother pining; his sister crying; and a sorry time is upon us all, up at the castle. Therefore came I at once to you. Please then, good Dame Mistletoe, tell me if you can, what has got our little man, and where we can find him."



Mistletoe pushed back her chair with a show of impatience, and set straight,

though needlessly, the high, steeple-crowned head-dress which she wore indoors and out, and looked hard at her small visitor.

She was an old woman, but wise and kindly. By the lads and lassies of the region she was much

"PERCHANCE, MISTRESS BERTHA, YOU
MAY BRING HIM TO HIS FEET
IN A BETTER SPIRIT, IF
YOU BUT TRY IT."

beloved, for she mended their disputes, stacked hay with them upon the meadow, or raked the field from sun-up to sun-down, as strong and wiry as any lad near her, checkmating his jesting with a pleasantry of her own, or giving him a word of healing when his fingers bled from awkward handling of the scythe. Time had for-

help me to divine the cause of his taking-off in this strange manner."

Mistletoe still looked hard at Holly-berry.

"What has become of those robber wights called the Hardi-Hoods?" she asked.

"Sir Charles broke up their den and drove them thence, as you know," answered Holly-berry somewhat testily.

"Went they willingly?" she questioned.

"In sooth, you ask only what you know," replied Holly-berry.

"Did you not hear them call down a thousand maledictions on Sir Charles's head, and promise him a bitter revenge for his treatment of them?"

"Where now are the outlaw Hardi-Hoods?" she queried further, pushing her chair nearer the fire as the wind rattled the door-latch and whistled down the chimney.

"Some say they are fled to the Western Isles; others, that they have snugly hid themselves in the fastnesses of the north or east country;

but I am not a soothsayer, nor yet a witch"; and he shrugged his shoulders in mild mockery, as he spread his fingers to the fire. "What should I know of them?"

"Holly-berry," said Dame Mistletoe, seriously, "are your brains addled, or why ask you me, 'Where is Ethelred'? The Hardi-Hoods' revenge is this,—they have stolen your young master."

Holly-berry smote his head with both hands.

"Plague take me to the Western Isles!" he cried; "of course 't is so, and 't is this that so works upon Sir Charles, for he knows not where they have betaken themselves, nor whether or no they have already slain the little lad. Now, tell me, kind Mistletoe; you who are so learned in the past and present,



"THE HARDI-HOODS HAVE STOLEN YOUR YOUNG MASTER."

gotten to embed wrinkles in the waxy whiteness of her complexion, and a silvery grayness in her eyes and hair made the name Mistletoe, which had befallen her, most fitting. Her nose and chin hooked somewhat toward each other, but this did not interfere with the sweet and placid expression of her face.

"I am not a soothsayer, nor yet a witch," she emphasized, "that I can tell what I do not know. What wot I of the pretty lad, save that he has not been this way for many a day, nor is he in these woods?"

"That is but telling what we already know," responded Holly-berry. "Sir Charles and his searchers found out two days ago that this wood held no Ethelred for them. Come you, good Mistletoe, put on your thinking-cap, and

though no soothsayer, you who are so wise, though no witch, tell me, I pray you, how to find these robber Hardi-Hoods—my thoughts run thick as mud."

"In years gone by," she said, smiling kindly at Holly-berry, as she noted his earnest face, "the Charlock house was kind to me and mine. To-day they are as good to me, building this cottage here for me upon this land, exacting no rental, and sending me many a load of wood, cut to fit within my fire-jamb. To-morrow morning I will start out in quest of these Hardi-Hoods, and it is more than perchance I shall fall upon a clue to guide us to their hiding-place. Go you back to Sir Charlock, with not one word of this to him, and in three days bespeak me here again, at this hour."

Holly-berry sprang to his feet. "Good Dame Mistletoe!" he exclaimed, "you go not alone on this search? Let me go too."

"No," she said, shaking her head so emphatically that the tall steeple-crown toppled to one side. "I may have reasons for my refusal you wot not of, and 't will be your place to stay at home, and mind that Sir Charlock brings no further grief to pass through his high-tempered sorrow."

"Kind Dame Mistletoe, I will obey you," said Holly-berry, doffing his cap and bowing gallantly. "I am off at once to do your bidding. Let not the suspense last but three days, and you have my best wishes for safety and success in your undertaking."

With a final wave of his cap in farewell, the little jester was out of sight in a star-twinkle, Jack Frost pinching his cheeks to a rainbow red and decking his doublet with a glitter of frost spangles before he had run the long mile which lay between Charlock castle and the three oaks.

(To be continued.)





A COZY CORNER.

FROM THE PICTURE BY FRANK MILLET. BY PERMISSION OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK.



the
stro
wa
goo
she
T
the
col
for
goo
bec
old
her
and
for s
A
ing
by, a
Po
the
desk
"C
he lo
favor
child
V

POLLY OLIVER'S PROBLEM.

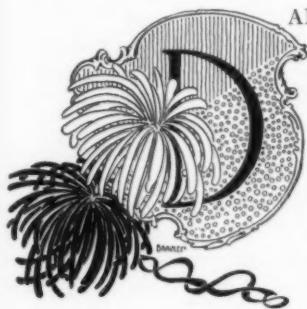
BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

Author of "The Birds' Christmas Carol," "A Summer in a Cañon," etc.

[*Begun in the November number.*]

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTOR GIVES POLLY A PRESCRIPTION.



AILY as the summer wore away Mrs. Oliver grew more and more languid, until at length she was forced to ask a widowed neighbor, Mrs. Chadwick, to come and take

the housekeeping cares until she should feel stronger. But beef-tea and drives, and salt-water bathing and tonics, seemed to do no good, and at length there came a day when she had not sufficient strength to sit up.

The sight of her mother actually in bed in the daytime gave Polly a sensation as of a cold hand clutching at her heart, and she ran for Dr. Edgerton in an agony of fear. But good "Dr. George" (as he was always called, because he began practice when his father, the old doctor, was still living) came home with her, cheered her by his hopeful view of the case, and asked her to call at his office that afternoon for some remedies.

After dinner was over, Polly kissed her sleeping mother, laid a rose on her pillow for good-bye, and stole out of the room.

Polly's heart was heavy as she walked into the office where the Doctor sat alone at his desk.

"Good-day, my dear!" he said cordially, as he looked up, for she was one of his prime favorites. "Bless my soul, how you do grow, child! Why, you are almost a woman!"

"I am quite a woman," said Polly, with a choking sensation in her throat, "and you have something to say to me, Dr. George, or you would n't have asked me to leave mama and come here this stifling day; you would have sent the medicine by your boy."

Dr. George put down his pen in mild amazement. "You *are* a woman, in every sense of the word, my dear! Bless my soul, how you do hit it occasionally, you sprig of a girl! Now, sit by that window, and we'll talk. What I wanted to say to you is this, Polly. Your mother must have an entire change. Six months ago I tried to send her to a rest-cure, but she refused to go anywhere without you, saying that you were her best tonic."

Two tears ran down Polly's cheeks.

"Tell me that again, please," she said softly, looking out of the window.

"She said—if you will have the very words, and all of them—that you were sun and stimulant, fresh air, medicine, and nourishment, and that she could not exist without those indispensables, even in a rest-cure."

Polly's head went down on the window-sill in a sudden passion of tears.

"Hoity-toity! that's a queer way of receiving a compliment, young woman!"

She tried to smile through her April shower.

"It makes me so happy, yet so unhappy, Dr. George. Mama has been working her strength away so many years, and I've been too little to know it, and too little to prevent it, and now that I am grown up I am afraid it is too late!"

"Not too late, at all," said Dr. George, cheerily; "only we must begin at once and attend to the matter thoroughly. Your mother has been in this southern climate too long, for one thing; she needs a change of air and scene. San Francisco will do, though it's not what I should choose. She must be taken entirely

away from her care, and from everything that will remind her of it; and she must live quietly, where she will not have to make a continual effort to smile and talk to people three times a day. Being agreeable, polite, and good-tempered for fifteen years, without a single lapse, will send anybody into a decline. You'll never go that way, my Polly! Now, excuse me, but how much ready money have you laid away?"

"Three hundred and twelve dollars."

"Whew!"

"It is a good deal," said Polly, with modest pride; "and it would have been more yet if we had not just painted the house."

"A good deal!" my poor lambkin!—I hoped it was \$1012 at least; but, however, you have the house, and that is as good as money. The house must be rented at once,—furniture, boarders, and all,—as it stands. It ought to bring \$85 or \$95 a month in these times, and you can manage on that, with the \$312 as a reserve."

"What if we should get to San Francisco and the tenant should give up the house?" asked Polly, with an absolutely new gleam of caution and business in her eye.

"Brava! Why do I attempt to advise such a capable little person? Well, in the first place, there are such things as leases; and, in the second place, if your tenant should move out the agent must find you another in short order, and you will live, meanwhile, on the reserve fund. But, joking aside, there is very little risk. It is going to be a great winter for Santa Barbara, and your house is attractive, convenient, and excellently located. If we can get your affairs into such shape that your mother will not be anxious, I hope, and think, that the entire change and rest, together with the bracing air, will work wonders. I shall give you a letter to a physician, a friend of mine, and fortunately I shall come up once a month during the winter to see an old patient who insists on retaining me just from force of habit."

"And in another year, Dr. George, I shall be ready to take care of mama myself; and then

"She shall sit on a cushion, and sew a fine seam, And feast upon strawberries, sugar, and cream."

"Assuredly, my Polly, assuredly." The Doctor was pacing up and down the office now,

hands in pockets, eyes on floor. "The world is your oyster; open it, my dear, open it. By the way" (with a sharp turn), "what do you propose to open it with?"

"I don't know yet, but not with boarders, Dr. George."

"Tut, tut, child; must n't despise small things!"

"Such as Mr. Greenwood," said Polly, irrepressibly, "weight two hundred and ninety pounds; and Mrs. Darling, height six feet one inch; no, I'll try not to."

"Well, if there's a vocation it will 'call,' you know, Polly. I'd rather like you for an assistant, to drive my horse and amuse my convalescents. Bless my soul! you'd make a superb nurse, except—"

"Except what, sir?"

"You're not in equilibrium yet, my child—if you know what I mean. You are either up or down—generally up. You bounce, so to speak. Now, a nurse must n't bounce; she must be poised, as it were, or suspended betwixt and between, like Mahomet's coffin. But thank Heaven for your high spirits, all the same! They will tide you over many a hard place, and the years will bring the yoke soon enough, Polly," and here Dr. George passed behind the girl's chair and put his two kind hands on her shoulders—"Polly, can you be really a woman? Can you put the little-girl days bravely behind you?"

"I can, Dr. George." This in a very trembling voice.

"Can you settle all these details for your mother, and assume responsibilities? Can you take her away, as if she were the child and you the mother, all at once?"

"I can!" This more firmly.

"Can you deny yourself for her, as she has for you? Can you keep cheerful and sunny; can you hide your fears, if there should be cause for any in your own heart? Can you be calm and strong, if—"

"No, no!" gasped Polly, dropping her head on the back of the chair and shivering like a leaf—"no, no; don't talk about fears, Dr. George. She will be better. She will be better very soon. I could not live—"

"It is n't so easy to die, my child, with

a ti
nigh
but
P
doct

plenty of warm young blood running pell-mell through your veins, and a sixteen-year-old heart that beats like a chronometer."

"I could not bear life without mama, Dr. George!"

"A human being, made in the image of God, can bear anything, child; but I hope you won't have to bear that sorrow for many a long year yet. I will come in to-morrow and coax your mother into a full assent to my plans; meanwhile, fly home with your medicines. There was

with her tearful eyes, said, "Dear Dr. George, you may believe in me—indeed, indeed you may!"

Dr. George looked out of his office window and mused as his eyes followed Polly up the shaded walk under the pepper-trees.

"Oh! these young things, these young things, how one's heart yearns over them!" he sighed. "There she goes, full tilt, notwithstanding the heat; hat swinging in her hand instead of being on her pretty head; her heart bursting with

fond schemes to keep that precious mother alive! It's a splendid nature, that girl's; one that is in danger of being wrecked by its own impetuosity, but one so full and rich that it is capable of bubbling over and enriching all the dull and sterile ones about it. Now, if all the money I can rake and scrape need not go to those languid, boneless children of my languid, boneless sister-in-law, I could put that brave little girl on her feet. I think she will be able to do battle with the world so long as she has her mother for a motive-power. The question is, how will she do it without?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOARDERS STAY,
AND THE OLIVERS GO.

DR. GEORGE found Mrs. Oliver too ill to



POLLY AND THE DOCTOR.

a time when you used to give my tonics at night and my sleeping-draughts in the morning; but I believe in you absolutely from this day."

Polly put her two slim hands in the kind doctor's, and, looking up into his genial face

be anything but reasonable. After a long talk about her own condition and Polly's future, she gave a somewhat tearful assent to all his plans for their welfare, and agreed to make the change when a suitable tenant was found for the house.

So Polly eased the anxiety that gnawed at her heart by incredible energy in the direction of house-cleaning; superintending all sorts of scrubbing, polishings, and renovating of carpets with the aid of an extra Chinaman, who was fresh from his native rice-fields and stupid enough to occupy any one's mind to the exclusion of other matters.

Each boarder in turn was asked to make a trip to the country on a certain day, and on his return found his room in spotless order; while all this time the tired mother lay quietly in her bed, knowing little or nothing of her daughter's superhuman efforts "to be good." But a month of rest worked wonders, and Mrs. Oliver finally became so like her usual delicate but energetic self that Polly almost forgot her fears, though she remitted none of her nursing and fond but rigid discipline.

At length something happened; and one glorious Saturday morning in October Polly saddled "Blanquita" (the white mare which Bell Winship had left in Polly's care during her European trip), and galloped over to the Nobles' ranch in a breathless state of excitement.

Blanquita was happy too; for Polly had a light hand on the rein and a light seat in the saddle; she knew there would be a long rest at the journey's end, and that too under a particularly shady pepper-tree, so both horse and rider were in a golden humor as they loped over the dusty road, the blue Pacific on the one hand, and the brown hills, thirsty for rain, on the other.

Polly tied Blanquita to the pepper-tree, caught her habit in one hand, and ran up the walnut-tree avenue to the Nobles' house. There was no one in; but that was nothing unusual, since a house is chiefly useful for sleeping purposes in that lovely climate. No one on the verandas, no one in the hammocks; finally she came upon Margery and her mother at work in their orange-tree sitting-room, Mrs. Noble with her mending-basket, Margery painting as usual.

The orange-tree sitting-room was merely a platform built under the trees, which in the season of blossoms shed a heavy fragrance in the warm air, and later on hung their branches of golden fruit almost into your very lap.

"Here you are!" cried Polly, plunging through the trees as she caught sight of Mar-

gery's pink dress. "You have n't any hats to swing, so please give three rousing cheers—the house is rented and a lease signed for a year!"

"Good news!" exclaimed Mrs. Noble, putting down her needle. "And who is the tenant?"

"Whom do you suppose? Mrs. Chadwick herself! She has been getting on very nicely with the housekeeping (part of the credit belongs to me, but no one would ever believe it), and the boarders have been gradually taught to spare mama and accustomed to her, so they are tolerably content. Ah Foy also has agreed



AH FOY—"THE BEST COOK IN SANTA BARBARA."

to stay, and that makes matters still more serene, as he is the best cook in Santa Barbara. Mrs. Chadwick will pay eighty-five dollars a month. Dr. George thinks we ought to get more, but mama is so glad to have somebody whom she knows, and so relieved to feel that there will be no general breaking up of the 'sweet, sweet home,' that she is glad to accept the eighty-five dollars; and I am sure that we can live in modest penury on that sum. Of course Mrs. Chadwick may weary in well-doing; or she may die; or she may even get married—though that's very unlikely, unless one of the boarders

can't pay his board and wants to make it up to her in some way. Heigho! I feel like a princess, like a capitalist, like a gilded society lady!" sighed Polly, fanning herself with her hat.

"And now you and your mother will come to us for a week or two, as you promised, won't you?" asked Mrs. Noble. "That will give you time to make your preparations comfortably."

Polly took a note from her pocket and handed it to Mrs. Noble: "Mrs. Oliver presents her compliments to Mrs. Noble, and says in this letter that we accept with pleasure Mrs. Noble's kind invitation to visit her. Said letter was not to be delivered in case Mrs. Noble omitted to renew the invitation; but as all is right I don't mind announcing that we are coming the day after to-morrow."

"Oh, Polly, Polly! How am I ever to live without you!" sighed Margery. "First Elsie, then Bell, now you!"

"Live for your Art with a big A, Peggy,—but it's not forever. By and by, when you are a successful artist and I am a successful something,—in short when we are both 'career,' which is my verb to express earning one's living by the exercise of some splendid talent,—we will 'career' together in some great metropolis. Our mothers shall dress in Lyons velvet and point-lace. Their delicate fingers, no longer sullied by the vulgar dish-cloth and duster, shall glitter with priceless gems, while you and I, the humble authors of their greatness, will heap dimes on dimes until we satisfy ambition."

Mrs. Noble smiled. "I hope your 'career,' as you call it, will be one in which imagination will be of use, Polly."

"I don't really imagine all the imaginations you imagine I imagine," said Polly, soberly, as she gave Mrs. Noble's hand an affectionate squeeze. "A good deal of it is 'whistling to keep my courage up.' But everything looks hopeful just now. Mama is so much better, everybody is so kind, and—do you know, I don't loathe the boarders half so much since we have rented them with the house?"

"They grow in beauty side by side,
They fill our home with glee.

Now that I can look upon them as personal property, part of our goods and chattels, they

have ceased to be disagreeable. Even Mr. Greenwood—you remember him, Margery?"

"The fat old man who calls you sprightly?"

"The very same; but he's done worse since. To be called sprightly is bad enough, but yesterday he said that he should n't be surprised *if I married well—in—course—of—time!*"

(Nothing but italics would convey the biting sarcasm of Polly's inflections, and no capitals in a printer's case could picture her flashing eyes or the vigor with which she prodded the earth with her riding-whip.)

"Neither should I," said Mrs. Noble, teasingly, after a moment of silence.

"Now, dearest Aunt Meg, don't take sides with that odious man! If, in the distant years, you ever see me on the point of marrying well, just mention Mr. Greenwood's name to me, and I'll draw back even if I am walking up the middle aisle!"

"Just to spite him; that would be sensible," said Margery.

"You could n't be so calm if you had to sit at the same table with him day after day. He belongs at the second table by—by—every law of his nature. But, as I was saying, now that we have rented him to Mrs. Chadwick with the rest of the furniture, and will have a percentage on him just as we do on the piano (which is far more valuable), I have been able to look at him pleasantly."

"You ought to be glad that the boarders like you," said Margery, reprovingly.

"They don't; only the horrors and the elderly gentlemen approve of me. But good-by for to-day, Aunt Meg. Come to the gate, Peggy, dear!"

The two friends walked through the orange-grove, their arms wound about each other, girl-fashion. They were silent, for each was sorry to lose the other, and a remembrance of the dear old times, the then unbroken circle, the peaceful school-days and merry vacations, stole into their young hearts, together with visions of the unknown future.

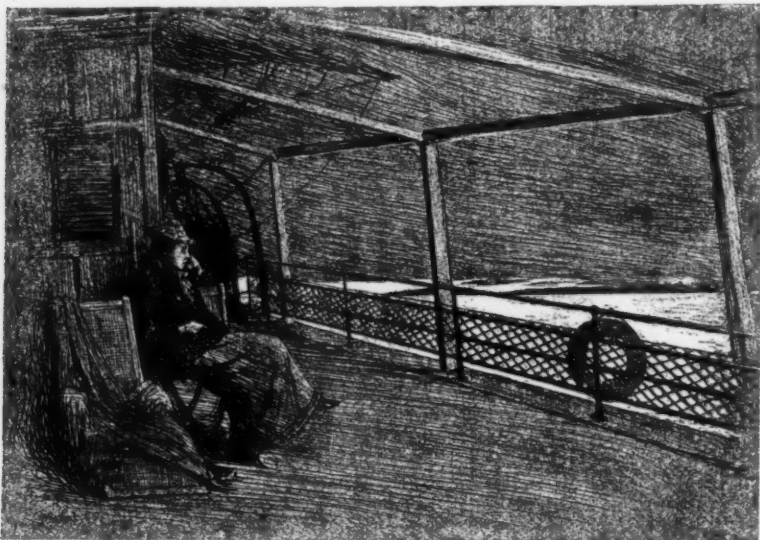
As Polly untied Blanquita and gave a heroic cinch to the saddle, she gave a last searching look at Margery, and said, finally, "Peggy, dear, I am very sure you are blue this morning; tell your faithful old Pollikins all about it."

One word was enough for Margery in her present mood, and she burst into tears on Polly's shoulder.

"Is it Edgar again?" whispered Polly.

"Yes," she sobbed. "Father has given him

ambitious boy I ever knew; and surely, surely he cannot have changed altogether! Surely he will come to himself when he knows he may have to leave college unless he does his best. I'm so sorry, dear old Peggy! It seems heart-



"POLLY SAT THERE ALONE AS THE SUNSET GLOW FALED IN THE WESTERN SKY." (SEE PAGE 103.)

three months more to stay in the university, and unless he does better he is to come home and live on the cattle-ranch. Mother is heart-broken over it; for you know, Polly, that Edgar will never endure such a life; and yet, dearly as he loves books, he is n't doing well with his studies. The president has written father that he is very indolent this term and often absent from recitations; and one of the Santa Barbara boys, a senior, writes Philip that he is not choosing good friends nor taking any rank in his class. Mother has written him such a letter this morning! If he can read it without turning his back upon his temptations, whatever they may be, I shall never have any pride in him again; and oh! Polly, I have been so proud of him,—my brilliant, handsome, charming brother!"

"Poor Edgar! I can't believe it is anything that will last. He is so bright and lovable; every one thought he would take the highest honors. Why, Margery, he is, or was, the most

less that my brighter times should begin just when you are in trouble. Perhaps mama and I can do something for Edgar; we will try, you may be sure. Good-by, dearest; I shall see you again very soon."

Ten days later Polly stood on the deck of the "Orizaba" just at dusk, looking back on lovely Santa Barbara as it lay in the lap of the foothills freshened by the first rains. The dull, red-tiled roofs of the old Spanish adobes gleamed through the green of the pepper-trees, the tips of the tall, straggling blue-gums stood out sharply against the sky, and the twin towers of the old mission rose in dazzling whiteness above a wilderness of verdure. The friendly faces on the wharf first merged themselves into a blurred mass of moving atoms, then sank into nothingness.

Polly glanced into her state-room. Mrs. Oliver was a good sailor and was lying snug

and warm under her blankets. So Polly took a camp-chair just outside the door, wrapped herself in her fur cape, crowded her tam-o'-Shanter tightly on, and sat there alone as the sunset glow paled in the western sky and darkness fell upon the face of the deep.

The mesa faded from sight; and then the lighthouse, where she had passed so many happy hours in her childhood. The bright disk of flame shone clear and steady across the quiet ocean, and seemed to say, *Let your light so shine! Let your light so shine! Good luck, Polly! Keep your own lamp filled and trimmed, like a wise little virgin!* And her heart answered "Good-by, dear light! I am leaving my little-girl days on the shore with you, and I am out on the open sea of life. I shall know that you are shining, though I cannot see you. Good-by! Shine on, dear light! I am going to seek my fortune!"

CHAPTER V.

TOLD IN LETTERS.

Extracts from Polly Oliver's correspondence.

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 1, 188-.

DEAR MARGERY: I have been able to write you only scraps of notes heretofore, but now that we are quite settled I can tell you about our new home. We were at a hotel for a week, as long as I, the family banker, felt that we could afford it. At the end of that time, by walking the streets from morning till night, looking at every house with a sign "To Let" on it, and taking mama to see only the desirable ones, we found a humble spot to lay our heads. It is a tiny upper "flat," which we rent for thirty dollars a month. The landlady calls it furnished, but she has an imagination which takes even higher flights than mine. Still, with the help of the pretty things from home, we are very cozy and comfortable. There is a tiny parlor, which with our Santa Barbara draperies, table-covers, afternoon tea-table, grasses, and books, looks like a corner of our dear home sitting-room. Out of this parlor is a sunny bedroom with two single brass bedsteads and space enough to spare for mama's rocking-chair in front of a window that looks out on the Golden Gate. The dining-room just holds, by a squeeze, the extension-table and four chairs, and the dot of a kitchen, with an enchanting gas-stove, completes the suite.

We are dining at a restaurant three squares away at present, and I cook the breakfasts and luncheons; but on Monday, as mama is so well, I begin school from nine to twelve each day under a special arrangement, and we are to have a little China boy who will assist in the work and go home at night to sleep. His wages will be eight dollars a month, and the washing probably four

dollars more. This, with the rent, takes forty-two dollars from our eighty-five, and it remains to be seen whether it is too much. I shall walk one way to school, although it is sixteen squares and all up and down hill. . . .

The rains thus far have been mostly in the night, and we have lovely days. Mama and I take long rides on the cable-cars in the afternoon, and stay out at the Cliff House on the rocks every pleasant Saturday. Then we've discovered nice little sheltered nooks in the sand-dunes beyond the park, and there we stay for hours, mama reading while I study. We are so quiet and so happy; we were never alone together in our lives before. We have a few pleasant friends here, you know, and they come to see mama without asking her to return the calls, as they see plainly she has no strength for society. . . .

POLLY.

P. S.—We have a remarkable front door which opens with a spring located in the wall at the top of the stairs. I never tire of opening it, even though each time I am obliged to go down-stairs to close it again.

When Dr. George came last week, he rang the bell, and being tired with the long pull up the hill, leaned against the door to breathe. Of course I knew nothing of this, and as soon as I heard the bell I flew to open the door with my usual neatness and despatch, when who should tumble in, full length, but poor dear Dr. George! He was so surprised, and the opposite neighbors were so interested, and I was so sorry, that I was almost hysterical. Dr. George insists that the door is a trap laid for unsuspecting country people.

Nov. 9.

. . . . The first week is over, and the finances did n't come out right at all. I have a system of book-keeping which is original, simple, practical, and absolutely reliable. The house-money I keep in a cigar-box with three partitions (formerly used for birds' eggs), and I divide the month's money in four parts, and pay everything weekly.

The money for car-fare, clothing, and sundries I keep in an old silver sugar-bowl, and the reserve fund (which we are never to touch save on the most dreadful provocation) in a Japanese ginger-jar with a cover. These, plainly marked, repose in my upper drawer. Mama has no business cares whatever, and everything ought to work to a charm, as it will after a while.

But this first week has been discouraging, and I have had to borrow enough from compartment two, cigar-box, to pay debts incurred by compartment one, cigar-box. This is probably because we had to buy a bag of flour and ten pounds of sugar. Of course this won't happen every week. . . .

I wrote Ah Foy a note after we arrived, for he really seems to have a human affection for us. I inclose his answer to my letter. It is such a miracle of Chinese construction that it is somewhat difficult to get his idea; still I think I see that he is grateful for past favors; that he misses us; that the boarders are going on "very happy and joy"; that he is glad mama is better and pleased with the teacher I selected for him. But here it is; judge for yourself:

DEAR MY FRIEND.

I was much pleased to received a letter from you how are Your getting along and my Dear if your leaves a go We but now I been it is here I am very sorry for are a your go to in San Francisco if any now did you been it is that here very happy and joy I am so glad for your are to do teachers for me but I am very much thank you Dear my friend.

Good Bye
AH FOY.

Nov. 15.

. . . . The first compartment, cigar-box, could n't pay back the money it borrowed from the second compartment, and so this in turn had to borrow from the third compartment. I could have made everything straight, I think, if we had n't bought a feather duster and a can of kerosene. The first will last forever, and the second for six weeks, so it is n't fair to call compartment number two extravagant. At the end of this month I shall remove some of the partitions in the cigar-box and keep the house-money in two parts, balancing accounts every fortnight. . . .

Nov. 24.

. . . . My bookkeeping is in a frightful snarl. There is neither borrowing nor lending in the cigar-box now, for all the money for the month is gone at the end of the third week. The water, it seems, was not included in the thirty dollars for the rent, and compartment three had to pay two dollars for that purpose when compartment two was still deeply in its debt. If compartment two had met only its rightful obligations, compartment three need n't have "failed," as they say down East; but as it is, poor compartment four is entirely empty and will have to borrow of the sugar-bowl or the ginger-jar. As these banks are not at all in the same line of business, they ought not to be drawn into the complications of the cigar-box, for they will have their own troubles by and by, but I don't know what else to do. . . .

Dec. 2.

. . . . It came out better at the end of the month than I feared, for we spent very little last week, and have part of the ten pounds of sugar, can of kerosene, feather duster, scrubbing-brush, blanc-mange mold, tapioca, sago, and spices with which to begin the next month. I suffered so with the debts, losses, business embarrassments, and failures of the four compartments that when I found I was only four dollars behind on the whole month's expenses I knocked all the compartments out, and am not going to keep things in weeks. I made up the deficit by taking two dollars out of the reserve fund, and two dollars out of my ten-dollar gold piece that Dr. George gave me on my birthday.

I have given the ginger-jar a note of hand for two dollars from the cigar-box, and it has resumed business at the old stand. Compartment four, cigar-box (which is perfectly innocent, as it was borrowed out of house and home by compartment three), also had to give a note to the sugar-bowl, and I made the ginger-jar give me a note for my two dollars birthday-money.

Whether all these obligations will be met without lawsuits, I cannot tell; but I know by the masterly manner in which I have fought my way through these intricate

affairs, with the loss of only four dollars in four weeks, that I possess decided business ability, and this gives me courage to struggle on.

Dec. 30, 188--.

. . . . We are having hard times, dear old Margery, though I do not regret coming to San Francisco, for mama could not bear the slightest noise or confusion, nor lift her hand to any sort of work, in her present condition. At any rate, we came by Dr. George's orders, so my conscience is clear. . . .

Mrs. Chadwick has sent us only sixty-five dollars this month, instead of eighty-five. Some of the boarders are behind in their payments. The darlings have gone away, and "she hopes to do better next month." Mama cannot bear to press her, she is so kind and well-meaning; so do not for the world mention the matter to Dr. George. I will write to him when I must, not before.

Meanwhile I walk to school both ways, saving a dollar and a quarter a month. Have found a cheaper washman; one dollar more saved. Cut down fruit bill; one dollar more. Blacked my white straw sailor with shoe-blackening, trimmed it with two neckties and an old blackbird badly molted; result perfectly hideous, but the sugar-bowl, clothing, and sundry fund out of debt and doing well. Had my faded gray dress dyed black, and trimmed the jacket with pieces of my moth-eaten cock's-feather boa; perfectly elegant! — almost too rich for my humble circumstances. Mama looks at me sadly when I don these ancient garments, and almost wishes I had n't such "a wealthy look." I tell her I expect the girls to say, when I walk into the school-yard on Monday, "Who is this that cometh with dyed garments from Bozrah?"

Mama has decided that I may enter a training-school for kindergartners next year; so I am taking the studies that will give me the best preparation, and I hope to earn part of my tuition fees when the time comes, by teaching as assistant. . . .

I go over to Berkeley once a week to talk Spanish with kind Professor Salazar and his wife. They insist that it is a pleasure, and will not allow mama to pay anything for the lessons. I also go every Tuesday to tell stories at the Children's Hospital. It is the dearest hour of the week. When I am distracted about bills and expenses and mama's health and Mrs. Chadwick's mismanagements and little Yung Lee's mistakes (for he is beautiful as an angel and stupid as a toad), I put on my hat and ride out there to the children, poor little things! They always have a welcome for me, bless them! and I always come back ready to take up my trials again. Edgar is waiting to take this to the post-box, so I must say good night. He is such a pleasure to us and such a comfort to mama. I know for the first time in my life the fun of having a brother.

Ever your affectionate, POLLIKINS.

The foregoing extracts from Polly's business letters give you an idea only of her financial difficulties. She was tempted to pour these into one sympathizing ear, inasmuch as she

kept all annoyances from her mother as far as possible; though household economies, as devised by her, lost much of their terror.

Mrs. Oliver was never able to see any great sorrow in a monthly deficit when Polly seated herself before her cash-boxes and explained her highly original financial operations. One would be indeed in dire distress of mind could one

refrain from smiling when, having made the preliminary announcement,—“The great feminine financier of the century is in her counting-room: Let the earth tremble!”—she planted herself on the bed, took pencil and account-book in lap, spread cigar-box, sugar-bowl, and ginger-jar before her, and ruffled her hair for the approaching contest.

(To be continued.)



A FRENCH HUNTING-DOG. (FROM A PAINTING BY ROSA BONHEUR.)

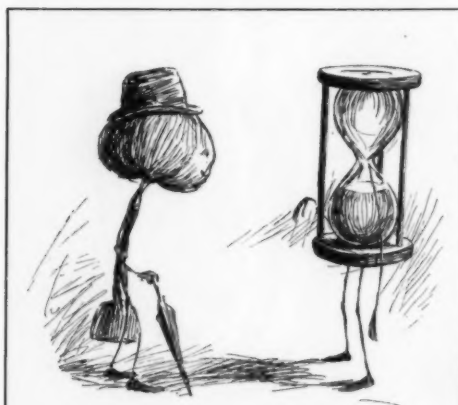
INANIMATE THINGS ANIMATED.

BY P. NEWELL.



A TEDIOUS UNDERTAKING.

THE SPOOL OF THREAD: "I declare I'd rather sit up all night than to undress."



THE GREEN TOMATO TO THE HOUR-GLASS: "Mister, would you please direct me to —"

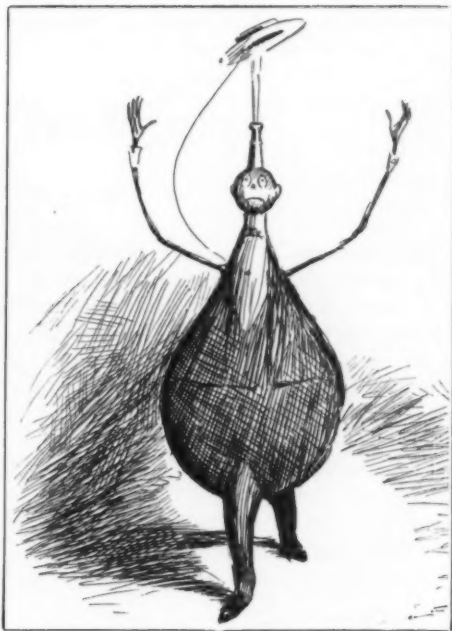


THE HOUR-GLASS: "Excuse me, please,—it's time for me to stand on my head."

ASTONISHING BEHAVIOR.



THE ALARMED ACCORDION: "Goodness, gracious! can this be pneumonia!"



POOR MR. BELLOWS: "It's no use. I can't wear a hat! every time I take a step my hat blows off!"



AN EXPLANATION.

This is not a Sioux ghost-dance. It is only the Feather Dusters' Annual Ball.

MARK TWAIN'S BIG NAMESAKE.

BY FRANK M. CHAPMAN.

ONE afternoon of the year 1841, General John Bidwell, then a young lad and a member of a band of pioneers who had crossed the Rockies and were descending the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas of California, in what is now Calaveras County, left his companions and went on a hunting expedition.

His success in securing game is not recorded, but his hunt will be forever memorable as probably the first occasion on which the giant sequoia, or "big-tree," was seen by a white man. The dusk of early evening caused him to hasten back to camp without pausing to examine these

County for the express purpose of learning more about the trees of which he had seen only enough to arouse his enthusiasm, but the war and the conquest of California, and, later, the excitement which followed the discovery of gold, caused him for the time to abandon the scheme.

Eleven years passed, and the big-tree, although it had been discovered, was still practically unknown. Then, in the spring of 1852, writes Mr. Shinn, to whom we owe this account, a hunter, while pursuing a wounded grizzly, found the sequoia grove in Calaveras. He evidently stayed long enough to become impressed by the size of the trees, for on returning to his comrades they refused to believe his stories, nor would they go with him to the scene of his alleged discovery.

One morning, a short time afterward, he came into camp, and, reporting that he had shot an enormous grizzly, asked his companions to go out and help him bring it in. Leading them to the sequoia grove, he pointed to the largest tree, and said triumphantly, "There, boys, is my grizzly!"

To-day we know that the home of the big-tree, *Sequoia gigantea* of botanists, extends from Placer County to southern Tulare County, on the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas, from 4000 to 6000 feet above the sea, and that on the coast, from Monterey County north to northern California, it has a near but smaller relative, the *Sequoia sempervirens*, or redwood.

The big-tree is surpassed in height only by the eucalyptus of Australia, while the redwood may claim the honor of being the third largest tree in the world. The largest known redwood is 366 feet in height and twenty feet in diameter. The big-tree attains a greater diameter, but does not reach a proportionately greater height. Thus there are big-trees recorded hav-



AT WORK ON THE BIG TREE. (SEE PAGE III.)

before-unheard-of kings of the forest, and the urgency of pressing onward to the coast prevented him from returning to them. He afterward planned an expedition to go to Calaveras

ing a diameter of forty-one feet, but we have seen none mentioned as being over 400 feet in height.

The height of the largest known eucalyptus tree is stated to be 470 feet, but the diameter is only twenty-seven feet. So while taller than the largest big-tree, if their proportions are the same, the California tree has about twice the bulk of the one which grows in Australia.

It is difficult for one who has not seen trees that tower from 300 to 400 feet into the air to realize their grandeur; and yet when we remember that the torch of the Goddess of Liberty is 305 feet above the waters of New York Bay, and that Trinity Church and Bunker Hill Monument are respectively only 283 and 220 feet in height, we may by comparison gain some idea of the impressiveness of these stupendous columns erected by the hand of nature.

By counting the layers, or rings of wood, one of which a growing tree acquires each year, it has been ascertained that the age of the larger big-trees is about 1200 years. Thus, while Britain was still under Saxon rule, and before Charlemagne had ascended the German throne, these monarchs of the forest had commenced to reign.

The big-tree is an evergreen related to the cedars, and at a distance young trees look not unlike cedars. But as they grow larger the resemblance is lost, and in comparison with their

size their foliage is scanty. The leaves, or "needles," are short, and grow from alternate sides of the stem; the cones, for so large a tree, are diminutive, and are about one inch and a half in diameter. The bark is deeply furrowed.



"WITH A ROAR WHICH ECHOED THROUGH THE HILLS, IT FELL PROSTRATE UPON THE LONG TRACK PREPARED TO RECEIVE IT." (SEE PAGE III.)

It is sometimes three feet in thickness, but is light and porous.

The wood of the big-tree is a valuable article of commerce, and after being sawed into marketable shape it is worth about \$30 a thousand feet. It is stated of one tree that it contained 537,000 feet of lumber, and at the value given it would, therefore, be worth \$16,110. We need not wonder, then, that the sequoia groves are rapidly disappearing before the ax of the lumberman.

The big-tree has been introduced into the botanical gardens of England and France, and one growing in the former country is nearly seventy feet in height. About thirty years ago,



YOUNG SEQUOIAS IN CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK.

two big-trees were planted in Central Park, New York City, but the climate there is evidently not suited to them, for they are now only thirty-five feet in height and fourteen inches in diameter. They may be seen to the left as one descends the steps from the mall to the lake.

But it is our object to tell of one big-tree in particular, rather than of big-trees in general. In the fall of 1891, the American Museum of Natural History of New York City sent one of its staff, Mr. S. D. Dill, to the Pacific coast in order to obtain there specimens of certain trees which were needed to complete the "Jesup Collection of North American Forestry." Among the trees desired was the big-tree, and I am asked to tell you about the one he procured.

After reaching San Francisco, Mr. Dill was fortunate enough to meet a gentleman who owned

a grove of big-trees at Sequoia Mills in Tulare County. This gentleman generously offered to give the museum any tree in his grove which Mr. Dill might select.

There are two sawmills at Sequoia Mills which each day during the summer season cut 130,000 feet of big-tree wood into boards, fence-posts, railway-ties, etc. These are sent to the nearest railway station, distant sixty miles, by means of a "flume." The flume, or trough, is wedge-shaped, with sides about eighteen inches wide, and is supplied with water by reservoirs. After being cut into the proper lengths the lumber is stored until it is partly dried, and then is placed in the flume and started on its sixty-mile float down the mountains, making the entire journey in about twelve hours.

In some of the big-tree groves the larger trees have received names; and often a small board bearing the name is fastened to the trunk of the forest giant.

The tree selected for the museum, of which at least a portion of the trunk was to be saved from the all-devouring mill, was known as the "Mark Twain." The "Mark Twain" was not the largest tree remaining in the grove, but it

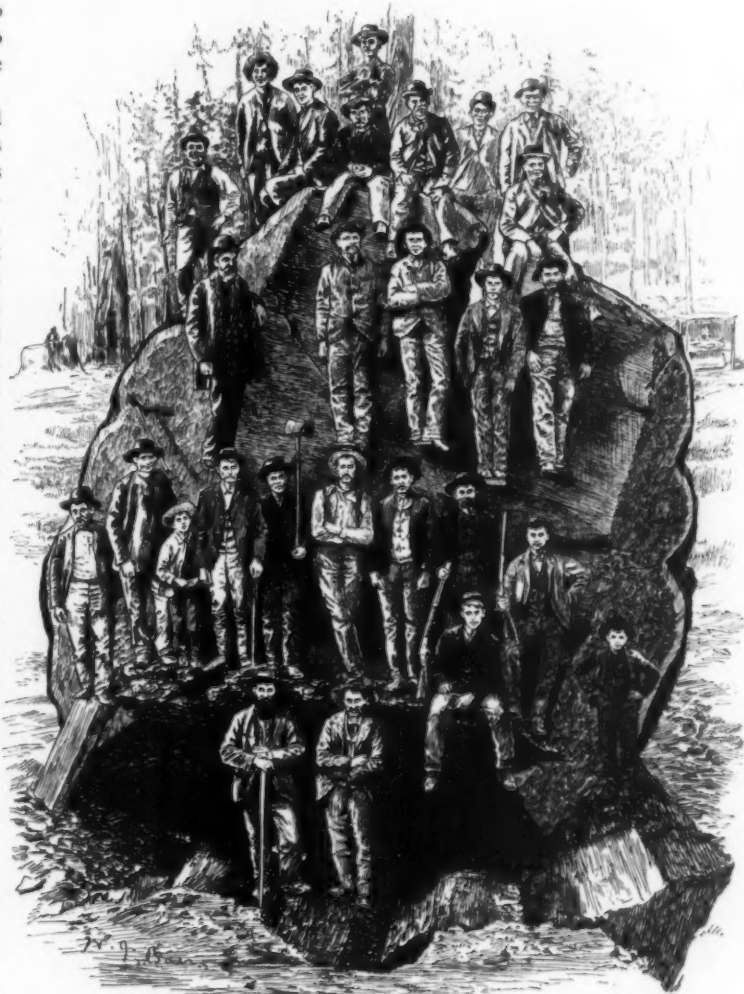


A WEEK'S WORK—ONE THIRD THROUGH THE GREAT TRUNK.

was one of the most perfect. At the base it was thirty feet in diameter, while for 150 feet its columnar trunk was unmarked by a limb, and its topmost branches were 300 feet above the ground. It was estimated to contain 400,000 feet of marketable lumber.

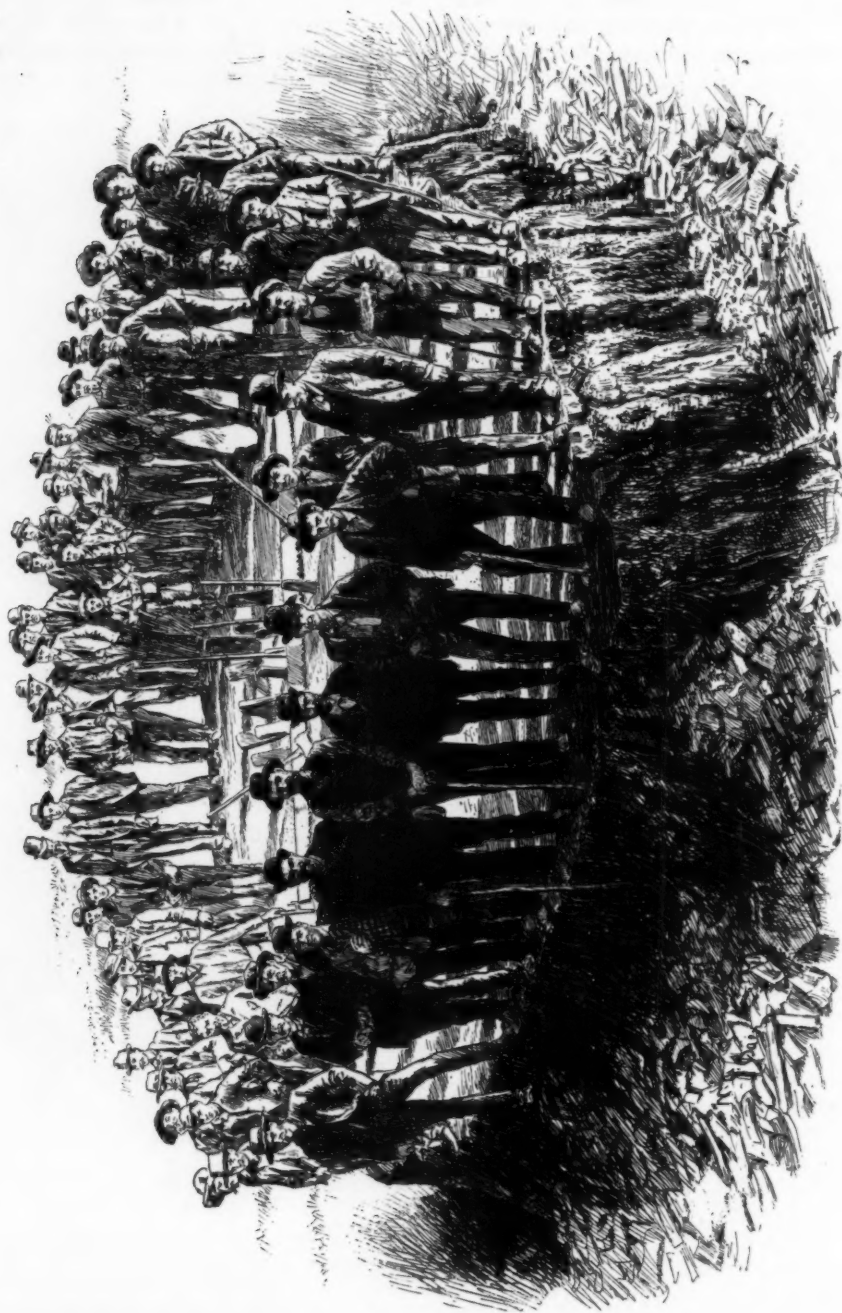
The ground where the tree was intended to lie was cleared of all opposing obstacles, in order that it might not be injured in its fall. Then a staging was erected on its trunk about twelve feet from the ground, and, mounting this, two axmen commenced the attack. As their labors progressed the staging was lowered, and, after chopping in about one third the diameter of the tree, it was removed to the opposite side, and the operation was repeated. The remaining portion of the trunk was now small enough to admit of the use of a double-handed saw, and after chopping out a small section from the third side to serve as a "shoulder," or hinge, for the tree in its fall, the saw was applied to the fourth side. Wedges were driven in the opening made by the saw, and the tree was thus made to fall in the desired direction.

After three weeks of chopping and sawing the giant yielded, and, with a roar which echoed through the hills, it fell prostrate upon the long track prepared to receive it.



"THREE TIERS OF MEN WERE GROUPED, ONE ABOVE THE OTHER, ON THE CUT SECTION OF THE TRUNK."

It was now the end of the lumber season, and before going down to the valleys for the winter, a number of the employees of the mill were photographed on the trunk and also on



"FIFTY-TWO OF THE MEN FORMED A CIRCLE UPON THE OUTER EDGE OF THE STUMP."

18
th
w
se
ci
tr
tw
le
fo
tr
m
is
th
wa
be
th
wa
ra
to
ve
wa

lun
the
se
CH
me
ha
tee
cu
len
lan
wil
cut
por
eac
ere
for
cul
wh
nes
the

tha
dis
onl
lun
fire
the

the stump of the tree. Three tiers of men were grouped one above the other on the cut section of the trunk, while fifty-two formed a circle around the outer edge of the stump.

But the museum did not want an entire big-tree, and in order to obtain the section desired two double-handed saws, each thirteen feet in length, were joined by brazing, and a section four and a half feet long was sawed from the trunk just above the place where the axmen had commenced to chop. This section is twenty feet in diameter, and weighs about thirty tons. To reduce it to portable size it was split into several smaller pieces. The lumbermen use dynamite for this purpose, but on this occasion iron wedges were employed. It was proposed to cart these specimens to the railway-station at once and ship them eastward to the museum, but a heavy fall of snow prevented their removal, and it was necessary to wait until the following spring.

The government has procured, from the same lumber company which presented this tree to the American Museum, part of an even larger sequoia for exhibition at the World's Fair at Chicago. The section which has been obtained measures thirty feet in length, twenty-one and a half feet in diameter at the bottom, and seventeen feet in diameter at the top. This will be cut into two sections each fourteen feet in length, and a third only two feet in length. The largest sections, which are taken from the ends, will be hollowed out, and all three will be cut into pieces small enough to admit of transportation. On reaching Chicago these pieces, each one of which is to be numbered, will be erected in their proper positions, and will thus form a kind of tree-tower consisting of two circular chambers, each fourteen feet in height, while the intervening section, having a thickness of two feet, will constitute the ceiling of the lower chamber and the floor of the upper.

At the present rate of destruction, in less than one hundred years from the time of their discovery the larger big-trees will be known only by their decaying stumps. Nor is the lumberman the big-tree's only enemy. Forest fires, and the herding of cattle which graze on the young trees in the big-tree districts, prove

equally destructive. Fortunately several small areas have been reserved by the government as national parks, and it is the duty not alone of every citizen of California, but of every citizen



A MONSTER.

of the United States, to see that the laws enacted for the preservation of these parks are rigidly enforced.



It was an empty robins' nest
Left over from last year!
And yet it held a tender guest,
That wept a dewdrop tear.

It turned its eye upon the sky—
The wind the tear brushed off;
And when the sun came out on high,
Its elfin cap 't would doff.

The guest—'t was but a chickweed flower,
The tiniest ever seen—
Made of the robins' nest a bower,
And kept their memory green.

Who knows how there the seedling grew,
With leaves and flowering stem?—
So long ago the robins flew,
You cannot ask of them!

MOLLY RYAN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

By W. J. HENDERSON.

It was bitter cold on the night before Christmas in latitude $40^{\circ} 30'$ north, longitude 50° west. That lies just south of the southern extremity of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, and a wild, melancholy, uneasy part of the Atlantic Ocean it is at the best of times. But on a Christmas eve, with the wind in the northwest, it is a home of desolation. The wind was northwesterly on that particular

Christmas eve, and it was blowing what landmen would call half a gale and a sailor a brisk breeze. But the good steamer "Astoria," from Liverpool for New York, made no account of a wind which served only to increase the draft in her fire-room, and to enable the engineer to squeeze half a dozen more revolutions per minute out of the propeller. She was making a fair nineteen and a half knots per hour.

When the cold spray came over the weather-bow like a discharge of shot made of ice, and slashed the face of the first officer away up on the bridge, he only pulled his cap down more tightly over his ears, hauled the muffler higher around his neck, squinted at the compass-card and gritted his teeth, for he realized that the mighty machine under his feet was letting the degrees of longitude drop astern at a pace which promised the steamship a splendid winter record.

"If the Captain had only laid the course to the nor'rard," he muttered, "we 'd 'a' broken the record. I don't see wot he 's a-buggalugin' around here for as if we was in the middle o' summer, with ice on the banks. Keep your eyes in the bowl, you!"

The last remark was addressed to the man at the wheel.

"I thought I seed summat w'en we riz to the last sea, sir," said the man.

"See! Ye could n't see your grandmother's ghost on sich a night, lad. It 's blacker 'n the inside o' a cuttle-fish."

It was black, and no mistake. Little Molly Ryan, who was among the poor steerage passengers with her father and mother, wondered if the ship was sailing on the ocean or just on darkness. Molly ought not to have been on deck, and if any sailor had seen her she would have been quickly sent below. But she was such a little body, and she huddled up so closely under the edge of the poop that no one discovered her. It was so gloomy and close in the steerage quarters, and so many poor women were sick, that Molly had stolen away, while her parents were dozing, to catch a breath of fresh air. The cold wind seemed to pierce through her, but she was fascinated by the darkness; and after a time she climbed up and sat on the rail, looking at the ghostly foam as it hurled itself against the iron side and swept hissing away under the quarter. Molly was in great danger, but she did not know it. She fancied she saw away down there in the black-and-white waters a beautiful Christmas tree loaded with silver toys that came and went with the foam. Molly had never had a Christmas tree, but she had heard about them, and her fondest hope was that some day she might

see one. She leaned far out, looking down into the waters, and, of course, she could not know how close the bark "Mary Ellis" was.

But the Mary Ellis was altogether too close. She was flying swiftly along, before the wind, thundering down into the yawning hollows that flung her bows aloft again with terrible force, and her course was diagonally across the bows of the steamer. Now the skipper of the Mary Ellis was a rough, mean man, and he was trying to save oil, so his side-lights were not burning. But those of the steamer were, and the watch on the bark's deck ought to have seen them. But for some reason they did not. So every moment, the two ships kept drawing closer and closer together, and just as a steward happened to catch sight of Molly, and called to her to get down, there was a sudden outbreak of shouts forward.

The first officer immediately called a swift order to the man at the wheel, then sprang to the engine-room telegraph, and signaled the engineer to stop.

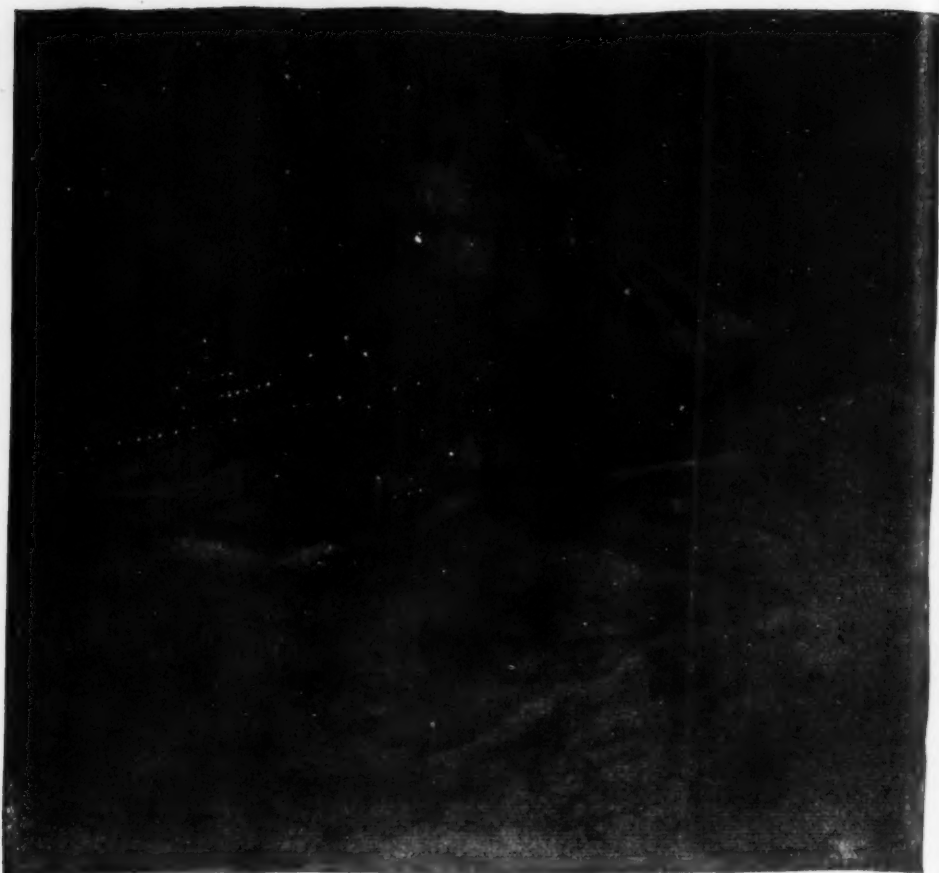
A few seconds later there was a jar, a noise of rending wood, and the Astoria struck the Mary Ellis a glancing blow on her port quarter, carrying away a part of her bulwarks. At the same instant Molly Ryan fell off the Astoria's rail into the sea.

"Man overboard!" screamed the steward, who reached the spot just a moment too late to catch her.

But it takes a long time to stop a steamer going nearly twenty knots an hour, and by the time that the first boat was lowered, the Astoria was far beyond the spot where Molly went over.

Fortunately for Molly, when she came to the surface half strangled, her little hands struck something hard which floated. With the strength of despair she climbed upon it. It was the part of the Mary Ellis's bulwarks knocked off in the collision. Still more fortunately for Molly, the captain of the bark, rushing on deck and hearing the cry, "Man overboard," thought that the words came from some one on his own vessel, and ordered one of his boats lowered away. Groping in the blackness amid the tumbling waters, the crew of this boat found Molly, and took her aboard the bark.

"Wot!" exclaimed the captain; "only a kid?



"THE TWO SHIPS KEPT DRAWING CLOSER AND CLOSER TOGETHER."

Take her forward, some of you, an' see her looked after."

And having made sure that the bark was not seriously injured, he returned to his cabin to sleep.

"Wal, Han'some," said a long, lean seaman, with a pointed beard, who looked for all the world like a Connecticut farmer, "wot ye goin' to dew with yer wrackage, now ye got her?"

"Thaw her out," said "Handsome," as he was called, carrying Molly into the galley.

The sailors fell into a general discussion as to how Molly should be treated, for the poor little thing was quite unconscious, and her clothes were freezing on her. However, after a while she was undressed, properly and gently "thawed

out," and put to bed. The sailor called Handsome mixed a warm drink and poured it between her teeth. She gave a little gasp, opened her eyes, and gazed around.

"Oh," she muttered, "there is n't any Christmas tree after all."

And with that she fainted away again. The sailors looked at one another in solemn silence, till finally one said, in a deep bass voice:

"Well, if she hain't a-untin' fer trees on the so'therly end o' the Grand Banks!"

"Wal, that 's wot she 's a-lookin' fur, an' that 's wot she 's a-goin' fur to get," said Handsome, slapping one huge fist into the other; and then he and the other seamen sat down under the forecandle lamp and conversed earnestly in

low tones. After several minutes of talk they all arose, and Farmer Joe said:

"Han'some, yeou air consid'ble peert w'en yeou're peert. But there's no time to lose. We must get to work right away."

While the rough sailors were at work, little Molly passed from a state of unconsciousness to one of sleep. The big seamen took turns in watching over her. It was not a pretty bedroom that Molly had that night. It was dark and dingy, and full of weird noises of groaning timbers. A swinging lantern threw changeful shadows into all the corners, and showed some very rude bunks in which several sailors off watch were trying to snatch a brief rest. Just behind those bunks against the stout sides of the bark the seas burst in booming shocks, and ever and anon there was a noise of falling water overhead. Up and away the bows would soar and then plunge down again with a sickening rush into the turmoil of foam. But of course the sailors thought nothing of all these things. The forecabin was their home, and they were long ago hardened to its sights and sounds. In spite of everything, Molly slept quite soundly, wrapped in a rough blanket and with a pea-jacket spread over her shoulders, while Handsome and the other sailors were at work with a boathook, some small pieces of wood, oakum, and green paint. Whatever it was that they were making, it was strange enough to look at; but their hearts were in their work, and they conversed earnestly in low tones. At last it was finished and set up in a bucket close against the bulkhead, where the lantern shed its fitful light full upon it.

"Werry good, too," said Handsome, gazing at it; "but it won't do unless it's got somethin' onto it."

And then those sailor-men went rummaging in their chests, and as they had been voyagers in all parts of the globe, they brought forth some curious toys to put upon the wondrous Christmas tree which they had made. Handsome contributed three large shells from the Indian Ocean, a dried mermaid, and a small Hindoo god which answered very well for a dolly. Another produced a South African dagger, Chinese puzzle, and three brass nose-rings from a South Pacific island. Farmer Joe brought

out a stuffed marmoset, an Indian amulet, and a tintype likeness of himself. A fourth sailor fished out of his chest a beautiful India silk handkerchief and a string of coral. Handsome gravely hung them on the Christmas tree. When all was done, he stepped back and studied the effect.

"Werry good, too," he said.

"Yas," said Farmer Joe; "I guess yeou could n't get any sech tree as that to haome."

At six o'clock on Christmas morning Molly awoke. It was still dark, and the lantern's light was but dim. The sailors were huddled back in the corner furthest from their wonderful



"HANDSOME'S" CHRISTMAS TREE.

Christmas tree, which was set where the child's eyes were most likely to fall on it as soon as she sat up in her bunk. So when Molly awoke she did sit up and stare straight in front of her with sleepy eyes, trying to collect her thoughts and



"'IS N'T THAT A CHRISTMAS TREE?' MOLLY ASKED."

make out where she was. Gradually she became conscious of the tree. Her eyes opened wider and wider. She almost ceased to breathe for a few moments. Then suddenly she clapped her hands together and, with a little scream of delight, cried joyously: "Why, it's a Christmas tree!"

The sailors nudged one another, and Handsome could not restrain a chuckle. Molly heard, and looked around at them. A puzzled ex-

pression came over her face, and she studied her surroundings for a minute.

"Is n't that a Christmas tree?" she asked.

"That's wot it is!" cried English; "an' we also is Santa Clauses."

"Oh!" exclaimed Molly; "what funny Santa Clauses! I always thought there was only one."

"Well, aboard this 'ere bark there is several."

"And oh!" cried Molly, clapping her hands and jumping out of the bunk, "what a lot of

funny things I 've got for my Christmas! I never got much before. But I think I'd rather have my father and mother, please." And then she looked as if she were about to cry.

"Don't go fer to cry," said Handsome, "an' I 'll sing ye a song."

"Oh, you *are* a nice Santa Claus!" cried Molly, brightening up.

"All the rest o' you Santa Clauses jine in the chor-i-us," said Handsome, standing up and taking a hitch at his trousers. Then he sang:

Oh, the cook he 's at the binnacle,
The captain 's in the galley,
An' the mate he 's at the foretop,
Wi' Sally in our alley;
An' the steward 's on the bobstay,
A-fishin' hard fer sole;
The wind is up an' down the mast;
So roll, boys, roll.

"CHOR-I-US."

Roll, boys, roll, boys!
Never mind the weather.
No matter how the wind blows,
We 'll all get there together.

Oh, the captain could n't steer a ship,
Because he was a Lascar;
The cook he had to show the way
From France to Madagascar;
The ship she could n't carry sail,
Because she had no rigin';
The crew they had to live on clams,—
'T was werry deep fer diggin'.
Roll, boys, roll, boys! etc.

The cook says: "Let the anchors go!"
The crew says: "We ain't got 'em."
The captain yells: "Then pack yer trunks!"
We 'll all go to the bottom."
The steward hove the lead, sirs,
'T was three feet deep, no more;
So every mother's son of us
Got up and walked ashore.
Roll, boys, roll, boys! etc.

The land was full o' cannibals,
W'ich made it interestin'.
We told 'em not to eat us, fer
We was sich bad digestin'.

The king comes down to see us,
An' he sports a paper collar;
An' he says if we 'll clear out o' that,
He 'll give us half a dollar.
Roll, boys, roll, boys! etc.

So we fells an injy rubber tree,
An' makes a big canoe,
About the shape and pattern
Of a number twenty shoe;
The cook he draws a sextant,
An' the captain draws his pistol:
One shoots the sun, an' one the king,
An' off we goes fer Bristol.
Roll, boys, roll, boys, etc.

An' now we 're safe ashore again,
We 're goin' fer to stay.
There 's grub to eat, an' grog for all,
An' wages good to pay.
I 'll cross my legs upon a stool,
An' never be a sailor;
I 'd rather be a butcher, or a
Baker, or a tailor.

Roll, boys, roll, boys!
Never mind the weather;
No matter how the wind blows,
We 'll all get there together.

At the end of the song all the seamen stood up, joined hands, and danced around, roaring out what Handsome called the "chorius," in such tremendous voices that the captain, who had come on deck, ran to the fore-castle hatch to see what was going on. He dropped down among his men so suddenly that they all paused in silence, expecting an outbreak of anger. But the captain slowly realized the meaning of the scene upon which he had intruded, and said:

"All right, lads; amuse her and take good care of her. And when we get to New York I 'll make it my business to find her father."

He was as good as his word, and in due time Molly was placed in the arms of her parents, who had been mourning her as dead. It was a joyous reunion, you may be sure. But all the rest of her life Molly remembered her strange Christmas eve at sea, and her wonderful Christmas tree.

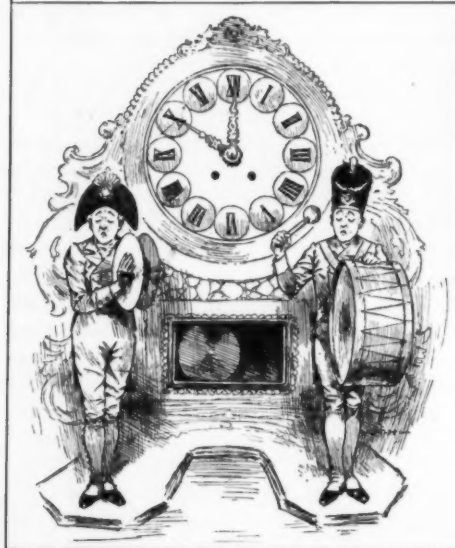
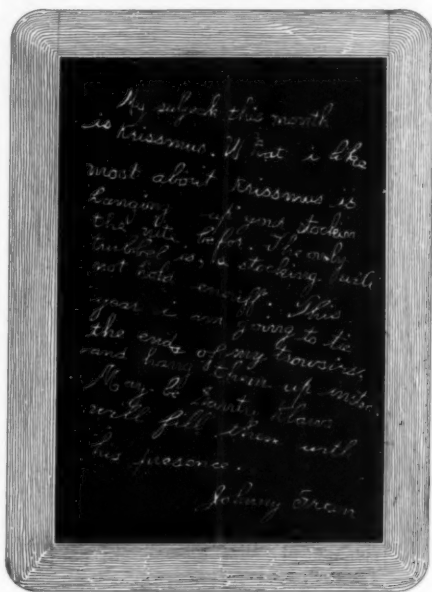
JUST FOR FUN.

BY MALCOLM DOUGLAS.



ON a fence, a few miles from the village,
one day,
A man on the cornet was trying to play.
"This would trouble," he said, "all the
neighbors, I fear,
So I come out to practise where no one
can hear."
Bless his dear little heart! It's not often
you see
Such a thoughtful, considerate person as he!

LITTLE JOHNNY'S COMPOSITION.



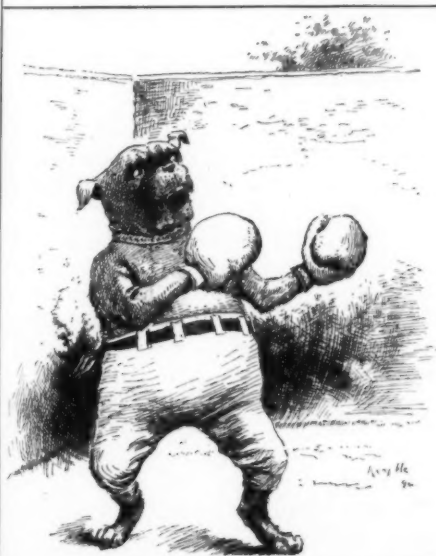
BEFORE a clock two figures stood, with
cymbals and a drum,
And one each hour went rub-a-dub, the
other tumty-tum;
"These concerts," they would grumble, "are
too great a strain, we fear;
Why, we're giving over eighty-seven hun-
dred in a year!"



BACK FROM THE CONCERT.

MRS. THOMAS DE CATT—Were any gifts showered on you, after you struck the high C?

MR. THOMAS DE CATT—Nothing of value, my dear; only a bootjack, two bottles, an old shoe-brush, and three tomato-cans.



THE BOASTFUL PUG.

THE boastful pug put on boxing-gloves,
And in a loud tone said he:
"I'm champion of all the little dogs;
Will any one spar with me?"
And the Maltese cat, from a safe place, said:
"To spar with you I'll agree."
"Come down on the ground, then," said
the pug;
Said the cat: "You come up in the tree!"



THE GINGERBREAD BOY.

THE gingerbread boy on the
Christmas tree

Looked down from his place
with joy;

"There 's always room at the
top," said he,

"For a well-bred gingerbread
boy."

HAROLD AND THE RAILWAY SIGNALS.

BY KIRK MUNROE.



WHEN "His Royal Highness" led the final charge that resulted in the utter defeat of the enemy, he had no idea that it was to be his last for that season. Of course not; for this was

Even they could not realize, though, *how* hard it was to be compelled to lie there day after day, and think sadly of all the games that were being played without him.

The fellows were very good about coming in to see him; the home folk read to him, and amused him all they could, but no one seemed to have any time to spare, and, of course, there were long hours during which he had to amuse himself. He tried to study, but did not succeed in accomplishing much, his knee hurt him so; and reading was uninteresting to one who longed for action. So, at times, there was nothing for him to do but just to listen and think.

The Holdens' homestead was near a railroad, and as Harold lay in his room, listening to all outdoor sounds and trying to determine what they were, he thought the locomotives had never whistled so loudly nor so continuously before. It actually made him nervous, in his weakened condition. What was all that whistling for? It almost seemed as though it were done on purpose to annoy him.

He asked every one who came near him, but no one could tell him much. His mother said she thought they just whistled to keep the track clear. Mr. Holden said that all the whistling was necessary, and meant something, though he did not know just what.

So "His Royal Highness" puzzled over the whistles, and could obtain no satisfactory explanation of their meaning, until one happy day when from down-stairs came joyous shouts of "Hal, Uncle Rawl's come! Uncle Rawl's come!"

A few moments later a quick step was heard on the stairs, and then Mr. Rawlins Holden, Hal's favorite uncle, and the one he was named after, entered the room. He was the manager of a great railroad out west. A fresh breeze and a flood of sunshine seemed to come with him, and his cheery greeting, "Well, my battle-

only the first match-game of foot-ball since the opening of school, and at least a dozen more were dated to be played before Thanksgiving.

H. R. H. in this case stands for Harold Rawlins Holden; but because of his initials he had been called "H. R. H.," or "His Royal Highness," ever since he could remember. When he became captain of the High School foot-ball team, the name seemed more appropriate than ever, for to what higher or more enviable position could a boy attain? As Hal Holden had won it by dint of sheer pluck and hard work, and as he was the most popular fellow in his class in other ways besides, they felt that the title of "His Royal Highness" was well deserved. And when, after leading that superb rush, and plunging headlong into the fierce scrimmage that gave the High School team the deciding touch-down, just as time was called, Hal made a vain effort to rise, and then fell back with a groan, the fellows gathered about him in deep distress. His knee was badly wrenched, and all their rubbings and pullings only seemed to make it worse. So, finally, the brave "center rush" was taken home in a carriage, and carried tenderly up to the room that he was not to leave for some weeks. It was "hard luck": all the fellows said so.

scarred veteran, what is the meaning of all this, eh?" was received with a warm welcome.

"Oh, Uncle Rawl, I'm so glad you're come! I hope you've come to stay. I have so much to tell you. And there's one thing that has been bothering me while I've been shut up here. You are a railroad man—won't you sit down, now, and tell me what the whistles mean?" cried Hal, eagerly.

"The whistles! What whistles?"

"Why, the car-whistles. There's one now. Does that mean 'Go ahead,' or 'Back,' or what?"

"I think it must have been one of the 'what?' whistles," replied Mr. Holden. "If I caught it rightly, it was a succession of short blasts, asking some one what he was doing on the track ahead of a train, and warning him to get out of the way. If it were a cow, or a horse, or a calf, or any other animal, the same signal would have been used; and out west we sometimes have to sound it to frighten deer from the track; and I have known cases where they refused to budge, and the train had to stop."

"One short blast means 'Stop,' does n't it? What means 'Go ahead'?"

"Two long blasts. But here, seeing that you are so interested in the subject, I'll mark all the whistle-signals on a bit of paper in long and short dashes, and you can study them at your leisure."

With this the railroad manager took a sheet of paper and jotted down on it the several whistle-signals in common use by all American railroads, accompanying each with a few words of explanation. Then he read as follows:

"One long blast (thus: —) must be sounded when approaching stations, junctions, or crossings of other railroads.

"Two long and two short blasts (like this: — — — —) are sounded just before crossing a wagon-road.

"One short blast (thus: —) is the call for brakes," continued Mr. Holden, "and two long ones (like this: — —) orders them to be loosed, or thrown off.

"Two short blasts (thus: — —) is an answering signal, and means 'All right. I understand'; while three short blasts (like this: — — —), to be repeated until acknowledged by the waving

of a flag or lantern, means, 'I want to back the train as soon as you are ready.'

"Four long blasts (so — — — —) calls in any flagman who may have been sent out to the east or north; while four long blasts and one short one (like this: — — — — —) calls in a flagman from the west or south.

"Four short blasts (thus: — — — —) is the engineman's impatient call to flagmen, switch-tenders, or trainmen, demanding, 'Why don't you show the signal for me to go ahead?' or, 'What is the matter?'

"When a train is standing, five short blasts (such as these: — — — — —) is the order for a brakeman to run back along the track and display a danger-signal for the next following train."

"What is the danger-signal?" asked Hal, who was beginning to consider these railroad signals almost as important and well worth knowing as those in which he drilled his football team.

"Red for danger, green for caution, and white for safety: flags by day and lanterns at night," replied the railroad uncle, adding: "I am sure you must have noticed men at road-crossings waving white flags to show that the track was clear, as your train rushed by?"

"Of course I have," answered Hal.

"Or the watchmen on sharp curves and bridges, waving green flags as much as to say: 'You may go ahead, but you must do so with caution'?"

"I don't remember seeing them," responded Hal; "but I'll look out for the green flags the very next time I go in the cars."

"A red flag or a red light is imperative," continued Mr. Holden, "and means 'Sound the call for brakes and stop at once.' There are other danger and cautionary signals I think you will be especially interested in," added his uncle, "torpedoes and fuses, for instance. A torpedo upon the rail is one of the most used and most reliable of all the danger-signals."

"But I should n't think it would be loud enough," objected Hal. "Why don't you use something louder,—say, cannon-crackers?"

"Oh, you are thinking of the little paper-wrapped torpedoes such as children play with;



STOPPED BY A FUSKE-SIGNAL.

but they are not the kind I mean. A railroad torpedo is a round tin box, just about the size of a silver dollar, filled with percussion-powder. Attached to it are two little leaden strips that can be bent under the edges of the rail, so as to hold the torpedo firmly in position on top of it. In this position, when a locomotive-wheel strikes it with the force of a sledge-hammer, it explodes with a report, fully as loud as a cannon-cracker, that can be plainly heard above all

other sounds of the train. It is a warning sufficient to arouse the engineman, and to render him keenly alert.

"If a train meets with any accident or obstruction that bids fair to cause a delay of more than a few seconds, the engineman sounds five short whistle-blasts (— — — —). On hearing this signal the rear brakeman must immediately run back a quarter of a mile or so, and place a torpedo on one of the rails that his

train
abo
mor
retu
flag
is s
he
ped
"

ary
ing
has
kee
imp
off,
onc
"

man
beh
whi
fire,
exa
of t
The
whe
aga
calo
ahe
"

Rav
who
plan
go
the
"

stru
who
"

duct
pull
"

the
to s

sign

"Ca
ahe

train has just passed over. Then, going back about two hundred yards farther, he places two more torpedoes, a rail's-length apart. He then returns to the first torpedo, and, with his red flag in hand, stands there until the recall signal is sounded from his own train. On hearing this, he picks up and takes with him the single torpedo, but leaves the other two where they are.

"These two torpedoes thus form a cautionary signal; and, translated by the next following engineman, mean 'The train ahead of you has met with a delay. Move cautiously, and keep a sharp lookout.' The single torpedo is an imperative warning to apply the air-brakes, 'Shut off,' and 'Reverse!'—in other words, 'Stop at once; for there is danger immediately ahead.'

"If a train is delayed at night, the rear brakeman sometimes leaves another bit of fireworks behind him when called in. It is a 'fusee,' which is a paper cone containing enough red fire, inextinguishable by wind or rain, to burn exactly five minutes, which is the shortest length of time allowed between two running trains. The engineman of a following train must stop when he comes to a fusee, and not move ahead again until it has burned out; though he can calculate from its condition just about how far ahead the next train is."

"I'm ever and ever so much obliged, Uncle Rawlins," exclaimed "His Royal Highness," who had been intensely interested in these explanations; "but I hope you're not too tired to go on; you have n't told me anything about the bell-signals yet."

"The gong-bell in the locomotive-cab is struck by means of a bell-cord that runs the whole length of the train."

"Oh, yes, I know. I have often seen a conductor pull the bell-cord in a car, and when he pulls once it means 'Go ahead,' does n't it?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Holden; "one tap of the bell when the train is standing, is the signal to start.

"Two taps when the train is running, is the signal to stop at once.

"Two taps when the train is standing, means 'Call in the flagmen. We are ready to go ahead.'

"Three taps when the train is running, means 'Stop at the next station.'

"Three taps when the train is standing, is the signal to move back.

"Four taps when the train is running, means 'Go a little slower.'

"When one tap of the bell is heard while the train is running, it is usually a sign that some of the cars have broken loose, and warns the engineman to ascertain immediately whether such is the case."

"Well, next, Uncle Rawl, what about the lantern-signals?"

"A lantern swung crosswise means 'Stop!' One raised and lowered means to go ahead. A lantern swung across the track when the train is standing, is the signal to move back; and one swung at arm's-length over the head when a train is running, means that some of the cars have broken loose. A flag, or even the hand, moved in any of these directions, must be obeyed as promptly as though the signal were made with a lantern."

"And now," said Mr. Holden, after finishing these welcome explanations. "While I am away I will try to get you one of the trainmen's book of rules, which, under the headings 'Whistle-Signals,' 'Bell-cord Signals,' 'Lantern-Signals,' 'Torpedoes and Fusees,' will explain the whole matter fully."

Harold warmly thanked his uncle.

The book was brought home that evening, and Harold found in it enough to interest him until his recovery.





From the Postboy to the Fast Mail.



BY ELIZABETH SATTERFIELD.

WHILE eagerly listening for the postman's ring, or reading the welcome letters that create a pleasant excitement in the home circle, do the ST. NICHOLAS young people ever think of the speedy and ingenious ways by which their dear absent friends are enabled to talk to them?

Perhaps a little chat about the methods and difficulties of conveying letters in bygone days may help you to realize and appreciate the advantages of the present.

We will not go farther back than the latter part of the seventeenth century—about two hundred years ago. And we will imagine ourselves in England.

There were no steamboats and steam-cars to carry travelers to near or distant parts of the country at that time. And as people stayed at home so generally, there was not nearly so much letter-writing as now. We go on frequent journeys, and want to let our dear ones know where we are, what we are doing, and how we are faring. Besides, there were not many post-offices outside of the cities and large towns, and it was only to important places in the vicinity of London that the mail was sent as often as once a day, and towns at some distance had their letters and newspapers but once a week. To remote country places, villages, gentlemen's country residences, and farms, especially during the winter, when the public and private roads were very bad, the mails were very uncertain, being often a fortnight and sometimes an entire month apart.

At that time the bags containing the letters were all carried by horsemen, the mail-carrier joggling along by night and day at the rate

of about five miles an hour—in good weather, and in summer-time; for the highways were usually in a very bad condition, so that fast riding was not possible. The postman often ran the risk of being stopped and plundered by mounted highwaymen, at that time a terror to travelers by horseback or coach. They seemed to be on a sharp lookout for any valuables in money, paper, or otherwise that might be sent in the post-bags. They rode the fastest and finest horses, were bold and daring; and when the postman found himself in a lonely road or crossing a dark moor late at night, you may be sure he urged his weary horse forward and joyfully welcomed the first ray of light that shone from the lantern swinging to the sign of the roadside inn.

Hounslow Heath, Finchley Common, and Gadshill, in the neighborhood of London, were celebrated haunts of the highwayman, and the secluded roads of Epping Forest, on the route to Cambridge, were often the scenes of plunder in broad daylight. These desperate robbers at last became so dangerous and the peril of their attacks so serious to travelers of all kinds, as well as to the postmen, that the government passed a law making highway robbery an offense punishable by the death of the criminal and the confiscation of all his property. But robberies still occurred.

In 1783, mail-coaches protected by armed guards took the place of postboys. The coaches carried passengers also, and, as these generally carried arms, the mails were better protected; but still daring and oftentimes successful attacks were made upon them.

As I have already told you, writing and re-

ceiving letters was not the every-day occurrence that it is with us. Letters to friends were usually written with much pains and formality, and carefully gave all the family news and neighborhood items that were supposed to be interesting to the recipients.

Occasionally a few words would be written on one corner of the folded letter, requesting the postman to forward it to its destination with "all speed."

But the various ways in which the letters of our great-great-*great*-ancestors were written, di-



AN ADVENTURE IN EPPING FOREST.

Stiff, quaint expressions described the quiet, old-fashioned romances, the sorrows, tragedies, and adventures of the entire country-side since the writing of the last letter—perhaps a year before. The sheets of paper were large and parchment-like, the handwriting usually plain and clear. Envelops were unknown. The letters were carefully folded with the blank side of one sheet on the outside, or were wrapped in an unwritten sheet. They were most carefully and formally addressed and safely sealed with wax and taper; sometimes a fine silken cord was tied around them before sealing, and this was secured by the seal.

rected, and sealed would make a story too long to be told here.

The newspapers were an important part of the mail. Such a thing as a daily paper was not dreamed of, as news was circulated so slowly that there would not have been enough to fill a small-sheet daily. The weekly paper was a moderate-sized two-page affair. The few received in remote country places by the prominent residents were passed on, after being read, to the neighbors, to be carefully read by them and returned.

In this country, at the same period, we distributed our letters and newspapers after the

style of our English relatives ; though, perhaps, we were a little more progressive in our methods.

Benjamin Franklin, who was made deputy postmaster-general for the colonies in 1753, was active in spreading and facilitating postal communication. In 1760 he astonished the people by his daring project to run stage-wagons for carrying the mails from Philadelphia to Boston once a week ! These wagons were to start from each city on Monday morning and to reach their destinations on Saturday evening.

As years passed the mail service was greatly

improved in this country and in Great Britain ; but the following extract from Mr. Robert MacKenzie's "The Nineteenth Century" will give you an idea of the way in which the most important and thrilling public and national intelligence was sent through England during the first third of this century. He says :

Intelligence traveled by a process so slow that it amuses us now to hear of it, although it was but as yesterday since no one dreamed of anything different. When the battle of Waterloo was fought, and the despatches three days after reached London, they were



"LOOK OUT FOR THE MAIL-COACH!"

print
into
rolle
At
news
every
of th
restle
In
hung
battl
grou
bags
comp
An
horn
coach
distrib
first

B
sum
amo
were
In
on a



AN IMPORTANT STOPPING-PLACE.

printed in newspapers and the newspapers were loaded into mail-coaches. By day and night these coaches rolled along at their pace of seven or eight miles an hour.

At all cross-roads messengers were waiting to get a newspaper, or a word of tidings from the guard. In every little town, as the hour approached for the arrival of the mail, the citizens hovered about the streets, waiting restlessly for the expected news.

In due time the coach rattled into the market-place, hung with branches; the now familiar token that a battle had been fought and a victory gained. Eager groups gathered. The guard, as he handed out his mail-bags, told of the decisive victory which had crowned and completed our efforts.

And then the coachman cracked his whip, the guard's horn gave forth once more its notes of triumph, and the coach rolled away, bearing the thrilling news into other districts. Thus was intelligence conveyed during the first thirty or forty years of the century.

Before the use of postage-stamps various sums were paid for the delivery of letters. The amounts were regulated by the distance, and were collected on the delivery of the letter.

In the early part of this century the postage on a single sheet of paper was eight cents, and

VOL. XX.—9.

over forty miles the rate was increased; so that over five hundred miles a single sheet was twenty-five cents. But after a time these rates were gradually reduced, until in 1845 a letter weighing not over half an ounce was five cents under three hundred miles, and over that distance, ten cents.

Sir Rowland Hill, who was at the head of the Post-office department of England at this time, introduced the use of postage-stamps in 1840, and also lessened the charges for postage. In 1847 the United States adopted the use of the postage-stamp, the lowest-priced one being five cents.

But railways and steamboats had now taken the place of the old-fashioned mail-coaches and postboys; and with the more rapid sending of the mails, the cheaper rates of postage, and the growing population of the country, gradual changes and improvements took place in the post-office system. And here we are, in 1892, receiving our letters from the Pacific coast in



THE CITY CARRIER.

six days — also from England in the same time; and a few days or hours will place us in direct communication with our friends and correspondents in almost every part of the country.

Still greater advantages in the way of rapid postal service are contemplated by the officials at the head of our postal affairs.

By electricity and in pneumatic tubes, doubtless, soon our letters, magazines, and papers will fly to us with a rapidity that is difficult for

us to realize. To think of it almost sets our heads spinning.

But delightful as it may be to hear from our absent friends so often and so speedily, there is said to be a drawback to this happy privilege.

The long, pleasant, newsy, charming, carefully written letters of the past seem with the increase of postal facilities to have gone quite out of fashion — and in their stead we have shorter ones carelessly written and badly expressed.

Now, let me venture to hope the ST. NICHOLAS young folk will cultivate the beautiful but neglected art of letter-writing — and when replying to the letters that have given them so much pleasure will try in return to tell in a bright, sensible way all the bits of family fun and cheery news.



A LETTER FROM FATHER.



"PHOEBE."

FROM A PAINTING BY ROBERT W. VONNOH.

A RACE WITH AN AVALANCHE.

BY FANNY HYDE MERRILL.

OVER a little town in the heart of the Rocky Mountains floated a heavy cloud. A young girl stood by the window of one of the pretty homes, and watched anxiously the sky above. As she looked, her brother stepped up behind her. "Never mind, Kate," he said, "we'll have a good Christmas, if it does snow."

Kate frowned. "What is the use of any more snow? It's four feet deep on the ground now, and all the roads are blocked. We can't get any Christmas mail; the sugar in town is all gone; only one cow to give milk for the children, not an egg to be had; we can't even bake a cake!"

And just then white flakes came floating through the air. Kate's exclamation was a doleful "There it comes! It's

Over near the
the father. As
distressed

too bad!"
large stove sat
he heard Kate's
voice, he came to the
window.

The Doctor was a slender man with kind eyes and gray hair. There were many lines across his forehead, but most of them had been drawn by care and thought, few by age, and none at all by discontent. As he stood and stroked Kate's hair, it was easy to see that the young girl was the pride of his heart.

"Your mother, my dear," her father said slowly, "was always glad when it snowed at Christmas time. She always said, 'A real Christmas should be a white Christmas.'"

Tears stood in Kate's eyes, and Harry turned away his head.

He did not wish Kate to know how desolate home had been to him since their mother's death.

Through the gathering snow two heavy figures came toward the house. Harry opened the door, and saw two strong men, with resolute faces.

"Does Dr. Ward live here?" they asked.

The doctor stepped forward. In spite of the storm, the men lifted their caps as they saw his face.



"There 's a man hurt up at the mines," said the taller of the two men. "Will you come up, Doctor?"

"Certainly," said the doctor, promptly.

The man looked at the two young people. "Doctor," he said, "you know the snow is sliding badly? It 's a deal of risk."

The doctor nodded, and put on his thick coat.

"Oh, papa!" cried Kate, "not to-day! Not you! We can't let you go." In distress she turned to the men: "Can't you get some younger man for such a hard trip?"

The man looked troubled. "I 'm sorry, Miss; we did try. But," his face hardening, "no other doctor will go. And the man is badly hurt."

Poor Kate! Father and brother had hidden their own grief over the mother's death, and striven to make her life bright. Now she could not believe she could be put aside for any other call. She clung to her father, sobbing.

"Kate," he said, as he took her hands, "my work is to *save* lives—"

"But, Papa! your life—so useful—*save that!*"

"My dear, who can tell which life is most needed? Besides, your fears are foolish, dear. There is probably no real danger. I shall come back safely, never fear."

He stopped with his hand on her head. Then, satchel in hand, he went to the door. As he stepped across the threshold he took Harry's hand. "My boy," he said, "you are like your mother. I can trust Kate to you"; and the door closed. The three men plowed their way up the street into the mountain-trail that led to the mines. Kate watched the figures grow small in the distance, till the snow hid them from sight. The mighty hills that shut in the town never looked to Kate so high, so silent, so unmoved as during the long hours of that day. In vain Harry planned diversions; she watched the window with a sorrowful face. Still the storm raged; and, as the twilight gathered, Harry could not keep anxiety from his face and voice. Down in the valley the twilight fades early, and it was dark when a heavy rap brought Harry to the door. There stood twelve men, and in their midst, on a sled, an uncouth mass of snow-covered blankets.

"Where 's father?" gasped Harry, staring at the sled with its heavy burden.

"He said we were to tell you the storm was so bad he 'd stay up at the mine to-night. We 're taking the fellow that was hurt down to the hospital."

"Noble fellows!" cried Harry, with his face aglow, as the men set off again. "Those twelve men have brought that hurt fellow down the mountain on a sled in this storm and darkness, over four feet of snow. They faced death every step of the way, for the snow is sliding all the time."

Kate stared at the fire, but said nothing. Suddenly a veil had been lifted. She saw not only her noble father risking his life for others,—that was no new vision,—but the rough, the faithful miners, twelve of them, risking their lives to carry to greater safety one poor, hurt, perhaps dying, man. And she—all day long she had brooded over her own selfish sorrow and anxiety, letting Harry try to amuse her, but never thinking of his troubles. With a flush of shame she started up.

"Harry," she said, "we 'll practise a little to-night; can't we?"

And Harry brought out his flute and the music with a face of such relief and happiness that Kate's heart gave another throb of remorse.

The morning of the next day dawned clear and cool. Gradually the sun rose over the mountains, each moment touching into new glory the light and shadow, the color and glittering sheen of the vast snow-covered hills. Kate sung over her morning work and thought tenderly of the new comfort she would bring into her father's life from that day forward. Nine o'clock it was before the sunlight touched the town in the valley. Harry began to watch the mountain-trail for his father. All day long the "beauty of the hills" glittered before the longing eyes of Kate and Harry, but no father came down the shining mountain-path. At three o'clock the sun went down, and the tints of sunset glowed upon the snowy heights. Kate bravely struggled through the pretense of a meal; but self-control is not learned in a day, and by evening Harry found her crying softly by herself.

"Kate," he said, "don't worry; to-morrow I'll go up the mountain and see if father is still there."

Harry started early next morning, and Kate bravely watched him out of sight.

"We'll be home for Christmas," he shouted back, for his spirits rose with the prospect of something to do. He climbed to the mines, and found, to his dismay, that his father had started down early the preceding morning, the superintendent having watched him out of sight.

"Well," said Harry, "I must go down and get up a party from town to search for him."

"That is the best way," said the manager.

He said nothing of the danger Harry himself must pass through. Danger was around them all.

Harry was strong, active, and skilful in the use of the "snow-shoes," or "skees," which he wore that day.

The boy's face was saddened by his fears for his father, but a resolute look flashed into his eyes as he made ready for the perilous trip. Just as he shot forward, came the thunder of a blast of dynamite in the mine above him. A shout went up, "A snow-slide!" and a mass of snow, dislodged by the explosion, came crushing past. A corner of the shed containing the men was carried away. The men looked at each other. Their escape had been narrow; where was the boy who had just now shot forward in the very path of the avalanche?

It needed no shout to tell Harry what the result of that report would be. He



HARRY'S RACE FOR LIFE.

had started, and almost at that instant the snow was on his track. There was no chance for turn or thought of pause. His only chance for life was to reach the valley before the avalanche.

Over the shortest, steepest descent he flew, the wind cutting his face, all thought merged in one fire of effort to fly faster.

out of his body, and for some minutes he did not move.

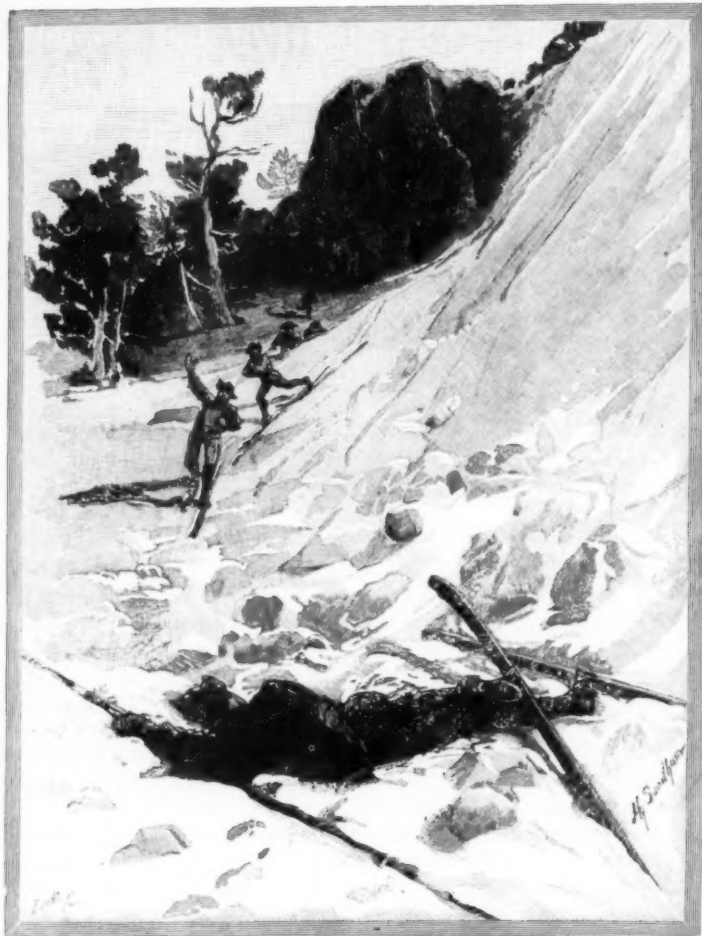
Then a shout came through the air, and he lifted himself as a band of miners came flying down the mountain toward him. They came on snow-shoes from the mines above, and were overjoyed to find the boy alive. "He beat the snow-slide!" they ejaculated, and Harry, a hero

from that hour, was escorted home in triumph. At the door stood Kate, and back of her the good father, safe and sound. On his way down from the mine, the doctor had been hailed by a man who lived in a little cabin sheltered in the mountain-side. The man's child had broken an arm, and by the time everything was done for his relief, the short day was so far gone that the doctor was obliged to stay all night.

That "Christmas eve," as Kate and Harry and their father stood watching the stars glow and sparkle in the keen mountain air, Kate put her hand on her father's arm as she said, "There won't be much for Christmas, to-morrow; but anything that could come to me would seem very small,

after having you and Harry given back to me."

"My dear," said her father, "since the Christmas angels first sang 'Peace on earth, good will toward men,' the best gift that can come to any of us is an unselfish heart."



A BAND OF MINERS CAME FLYING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TOWARD HIM.

Faster, faster, he skimmed the glittering snow till he shot like an arrow from a bow into the plain below, and fell headlong covered by the frosty spray at the edge of the spent avalanche. The breath seemed pressed

THE WHITE CAVE.

BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD.



"WITH LONG FRIGHTENED LEAPS, THE KANGAROOS DASHED FRANTICALLY TOWARD THE NEAREST COVER." (SEE PAGE 138.)

[*Begun in the November number.*]

CHAPTER III.

BOOMERANGS.



sent its searching rays into many wild-looking places.

One of them was a mountain pass, between gigantic and almost perpendicular walls of rock, which were grandly high, and shattered, and irregular. Only here and there could the sunshine reach the boulder-strewn, natural road

SEVERAL long days after Sir Frederick Parry's excursion-party set out so merrily from The Grampians, the hot December sunlight shone down over the wilderness, and

at the bottom of the pass. No wagon could have traveled that road, but a horse could do so, or a man; and in and out among the boulders, carefully picking his way, a man was leading a heavily laden horse. The animal was large, and strong, and bony, and so was the man. The horse was black, and looked as if his coat had never known a currycomb or a brush. At intervals, the man cast quick, anxious glances behind him, up the pass.

"They're after me again," he exclaimed. "I knew they'd follow me, as soon as I met that fellow Jim. They have n't caught up yet, though; and I'll beat them, this time, as I have beaten them before. But it won't do to push too fast with such a cargo as this."

He was silent, for a moment, while he helped the horse through a bad place, throwing some fragments of rock out of the way with an ease that suggested a reason why no one man would be likely to stop him. Then he added:

"I won't have to visit that gulch again. I've emptied my old hiding-place this time, and I'm bound to land this cargo in the cave. What I'll do then I don't know; but I won't let that crew of robbers get it. And they sha'n't get me, either."

In another forest place, there was a long but not very wide level of rich green grass, surrounded by remarkable trees, some of which were enormously tall; and it seemed as if several of them had found themselves too crowded, and had moved out and selected new standing-places in the open prairie. These prairie trees were at considerable distances from each other, and one of them had queer company.

It was a company of four, and they were four-footed animals, but they did not seem to know what to do with their feet. When they sat down, they still appeared to be standing up, and the largest of them, when sitting, held his head as high as that of a man.

They were evidently in their own pasture-ground, for they were feeding; but they kept up the most timid and ceaseless watch in all directions. A hunter would have said that they would prove as difficult to "stalk" as a herd of red deer.

Along the easterly edge of the open pasture ran a line of dense bushes; and completely hidden behind one of these bushes two boys were lying upon the ground.

"Ned, look! I'm glad we did creep up. There are four kangaroos!"

"Just what we're after, Hugh," whispered Ned; "but they're away out of range."

"I don't see how we can get any nearer," said Hugh. "They're the timidest game! We'll lose them, I'm afraid."

"If we don't get one of them we'll starve!" exclaimed Ned. "I wish I had a rifle instead of this double-barreled gun."

"And buck-shot won't reach them," said Hugh. "Maybe they'll feed out this way. Wait."

"It's hard to wait," said Ned. "Not a mouthful to eat since yesterday noon! I'm fearfully thirsty, too."

"I'm afraid they have n't any fresh meat in the camp, either," replied Hugh. "I wish we

knew where it is. Mother'll be dreadfully worried about us."

"Keep still," said Ned. "They're moving!"

Ned and Hugh now stared more and more eagerly out at the group of kangaroos. At a little distance behind the lads, a pair of saddled horses were tethered to a sapling, and behind each saddle was strapped a rolled-up blanket. Each of the boys carried a double-barreled, breech-loading "duck-gun." It was evident that they had wandered from the camp to hunt, and had lost their way.

"We must n't starve!" said Ned.

"If we were on the other side of that cabbage-tree," replied Hugh, "we'd be within easy range of them."

That was precisely the reason why the cabbage-palm had yet other company, that sunny summer morning in December. Queer company were these, also—as queer as were the kangaroos themselves. Half a dozen dark, almost naked human forms seemed to be making use of the great tree to hide the crouching, creeping, snake-like gliding of their swift approach for a nearer look at the watchful game. They were gaunt and lean, but very muscular men. They were very black, with woolly hair, but they did not have African faces. Their bodies and limbs were marked with singular ridges of welts and scars, but they were not tattooed, and they did not carry any weapons of white men's manufacture. On the other hand, each of them seemed burdened with a curious collection of spears and sticks, although none had a bow.

"Hugh," said Ned, "there are bushes over there, beyond that tree. We could creep close up, if we could get around to that side of it."

"We could get a brace of them!" replied Hugh, excitedly. "Let's try."

A branch of a bush was just then waving slowly, out at the side of the trunk of the palm. It was as if the wind moved it, and it did not attract any attention from the kangaroos.

But there came, at that moment, a flash of quick and anxious intelligence into the dark, keen eyes of the Yankee boy.

"Lie low, Hugh!" he exclaimed. "Look! There is n't any wind. Something else must be moving that bush. Wait a bit."

"There it is again," said Hugh; "away out."

But neither of them could see through the dense foliage of the handful of twigs which waved up and down against the cabbage-palm. Eyes on the opposite side could see better than theirs, however, and a large, rolling, eager pair of very black eyes were using that green branch as a mask.

The black man watched the kangaroos intently for a moment, and he seemed to be taking a kind of measurement of their distance from the foot of the palm. Then he drew back, and a second black man took his turn at looking, with the bush-branches for a screen, and he also drew back. He put down the twigs, and the two seemed to be studying. Two men who could neither count nor measure, as civilized men count and measure, were in reality counting and measuring as accurately as if they had been a pair of surveyors with perfect instruments. They had dropped their spears and sticks before peeping out at the kangaroos, and now each of them stooped and picked up a queer crooked club. All the other black men lay flat in the grass, while these two went on with their puzzling operations. Neither of them could see any part of a kangaroo through the trunk of the tree. Each stood and balanced himself, leaning forward, with his bit of curved wood held in his right hand by one end. Those crooked sticks were not much over two feet long, perhaps not more than two or three inches wide at the center, the widest part, and were made to taper at each end. They were curved on one face and flat on the other and sharp at the edges. You would have said great pains had been taken to shape those sticks so that it would be impossible for anybody to throw them straight or make them hit any object they were thrown at.

Each black man held his dark, heavy-looking, wooden weapon with the flat side down, until he had finished his balancing and calculating, and then he suddenly drew back and hurled it from him, with a peculiar, jerking twist of his wrist. Almost at the same moment, each of them stooped and picked another and threw it, and then a third. As the third cast was made, each uttered a loud, screeching yell, the two harsh cries bursting forth at almost the

same second, followed by yells from all the rest of the party as they sprang from the grass, seized their spears and sticks and bounded forward.

Ned and Hugh had noted every movement of the green mask by the palm, and the kangaroos also must have begun to suspect danger, for all of them had ceased feeding, sat upright, and pricked their ears and turned their pretty heads inquiringly. The largest of them was in the very act of rising for a forward bound when something struck him upon the neck, just above the shoulder.

There had been a faint whizzing and whirling in the air. It began behind the cabbage-palm and went out sidewise and upward, through the air, while something dimly visible flashed away in a wide, sweeping curve. Up, up, up, went the whiz and whirl, and then down, down, after a strange, mysterious fashion, closely accompanied by another, just like it. Then there was a thud, thud,—and the great kangaroo did not make his leap. He rolled over and over in the grass, for one of those wonderful missiles had actually broken his neck. And another kangaroo had fallen also.

"Hugh! Hugh!" exclaimed Ned, in a tone of intense excitement. "Boomerangs!"

"Boomerangs!" responded Hugh. "Oh, Ned! They must have been thrown by black-fellows! Everybody thinks there are none of them around here!"

"We must n't let 'em know *we* are here," said Ned.

"What if they find the camp!" gasped Hugh.

"Look," replied Ned. "Here come the other two kangaroos!"

"Don't shoot!" said Hugh, for Ned was raising his gun. "The bushmen will know we're here."

But for all that he also cocked both hammers of his gun.

There was no time for cool counsel, but the boys might not have fired if it had not been for the reckless conduct of those escaping kangaroos.

With long, flying, frightened leaps, the unhurt pair dashed frantically toward the nearest cover—the very bushes where Ned and Hugh were hiding.

"They are coming right for us!" said Hugh. "The blackfellows will find us, anyhow."

The kangaroos were thinking only of getting away from the yelling black dangers that sprang out from behind the cabbage-palm. Near as they now came to the boys, they were not easy marks for any one but a very good shot. Crash, crash, crash, they came dashing into the dense barrier of the bushes and underbrush.

Bang, bang, went the ringing reports of two guns, for Hugh followed Ned's excited example.

"We've bagged 'em both!" said Ned.

but Ned interrupted him suddenly, in a tone of intense anxiety:

"No, they won't! See the tops of that grass quiver, out yonder? One of them's playing snake. You and I must get out of this, and be quick about it!"

"That's so," exclaimed Hugh; "but as Bob McCracken's been saying ever since we left the Grampians, you're a born scout. I'd never have noticed that grass."

"Don't you see?" said Ned. "He's snaking toward these bushes. As soon as he gets



"HE SUDDENLY DREW BACK AND HURLED THE BOOMERANG."

"Yes," said Hugh, "we have them. But now those black cannibals know we are here."

"They don't know how many there are of us," said Ned. "Look at them."

The foremost black men had been almost upon their game when the gun reports reached their ears; and it looked as if all but one of them had been instantly killed, so suddenly did they drop into the grass where they stood, and lie still.

"Let's get away," said Ned, "while our chance is good. Why! they have vanished like magic!"

The undulating level of rich grass did not seem to have one living creature upon its surface.

"They will lie there a while," began Hugh,

under cover he'll come after us. Come along! We must move quickly!"

The boys were in a perfect tremble of excitement. Each slipped a fresh cartridge into his gun, and the horses were unhitched and led up to where the two kangaroos lay. They were smaller than the pair that had fallen under the boomerangs, for the black hunters had taken their choice. Still, it was a heavy lift for the boys to raise their unexpected prizes and to fasten them on the horses.

Hugh's rosy face, as he did so, wore only a look of boyish exuberance, without a shadow of fear; but he exclaimed: "Now, Ned, they'll follow us. Anyhow, we've seen how the blackfellows throw their boomerangs!"

Ned's movements seemed to be a trifle

quicker than Hugh's, and he also appeared warier and cooler.

"We can get away," he said, "while that fellow in the grass is working around to find out about us. What would n't I give to know where the camp is!"

"It can't be so very far," said Hugh; and then the smile left his face as he added, "Our people don't dream of there being any blackfellows in this neighborhood. It's awful that we can't go in and warn them."

"They have the dogs," said Ned, as he urged his horse forward. "They can't be surprised. *We* are in a fix, though."

"We have something to eat, now, anyway," said Hugh. "We won't starve if we *are* lost in the bush."

"With blackfellows ready to spear us," said Ned, "as soon as we stop anywhere long enough to cook and eat!"

"We can fight any small squad of them," said Hugh, combatively.

"I'd rather fight blackfellows than so many American Indians," replied Ned. "I guess they can't do much with boomerangs in the woods."

"They can use them pretty well," said Hugh, "and they can skulk around and throw spears and clubs."

"We must push right along," said Ned. "Keep in the open places. We'll beat them."

The quivering motion in the tops of the prairie-grass had indeed been made by the snake-like passage of a savage body. It was altogether remarkable, too, how rapidly that short, bony, emaciated blackfellow could crawl; but he could not keep pace with a man walking, much less a nimble-footed Australian horse. He reached the line of bushes, at some distance from the spot where the boys had been lurking, and then he sprang to his feet. He could go faster after that, but he advanced with noiseless caution, for he had no idea how many enemies might be near him, besides the two who had been firing. It was only a few minutes, however, as he drew nearer to the exact spot, before his black eyes began to glisten with a strange, fierce light; his lips drew back, disclosing the rows of large, white teeth; and his whole body quivered, as those of the two boomerang-throwers

had quivered just as they were making their casts. He felt much as a wild beast feels when about to spring. He made no sound until, as he peered fiercely out from behind a bush, it flashed upon his keen, instinctive intelligence that the men who had fired the guns were gone. He darted out of his bushy cover. Swift and searching were the glances of his glittering eyes, and they did not miss a token that Ned or Hugh had left. He noted the footmarks; the bloody ground where the kangaroos had fallen; the trail made by the two horses as they went away; and then he raised his head.

A sound went out through the air and floated toward the cabbage-palm. It sounded as if it might have been the cry of a distant bird. It might almost have been the sigh of a wind among the trees; but it must have had some peculiar meaning, for the blackfellows who had been lying hidden in the grass, out in the prairie, were instantly upon their feet, racing swiftly to join their comrade in the bushes.

At that very moment but several miles away, a very different kind of sound seemed to be hunting, hunting, hunting around among the trees. It came from different human voices, and in all of them it was both inquiring and plaintive.

"Coo-ee-e? Coo-ee-e? Coo-ee-e?"

The several voices were not answering one another, apparently, but each was asking the whereabouts of some one who did not as yet hear or answer. They grew more and more anxiously questioning, as the deeper or shriller-toned "coo-ee-es" vainly rose and fell among the silent shadows of the endless forest.

"Coo-ee-e—Oh, Aunt Maude! I can't call any more! But hear the men. I wish the boys could hear them!"

"Helen! Your pony!"

He was a spirited, handsome little fellow, and while Helen's earnest blue eyes searched among the trees the pony's forefeet left the ground and he made a sudden leap over a fallen tree.

"Helen! Be careful!"

There was apparently no need for her aunt to caution her, for she followed every movement of the pony as if she had been part of him. So did Lady Parry keep her own place,

in the saddle of the larger and more powerful animal which carried her over the same barrier. On horseback, or anywhere else, she was always a very stately, self-possessed, and dignified lady.

"Keep right on, Helen," she said. "I must know what they are going to do next. We *must* find those boys!"

tain was taking an interest in the matter and was shouting: "Coo-ee-e? Coo-ee-e?"

A moment later, a man on horseback rode out under the trees at the water's edge. It was Sir Frederick Parry, and he called to one of his men, near by:

"I can't coo-ee-e any more, but I wish those



"HELEN'S PONY MADE A SUDDEN LEAP OVER A FALLEN TREE."

"Oh, it is dreadful!" replied Helen.

They both looked pale, pained—almost frightened, as they rode on, and they were all the while peering intently through the spaces of the forest, and listening.

"No, no," remarked Lady Maude, again and again; "there is no answer."

Only a short ride beyond them there was a vast, frowning wall of granite rock, rising almost perpendicularly, hundreds of feet above the tallest trees. At the foot of this wall, there rolled and tumbled and gurgled a torrent of clear water. Across the stream and against the rock went call after call; and they were thrown back among the tree-tops as if the very moun-

boys would turn up. Do you think we're getting nearer to them, Bob?"

"Yes, sir," replied a very respectful voice, a little behind him. "Yes, sir. They'll turn up before long, sir. Had n't we better go into camp, sir? We've had a pretty long march, since morning, sir."

"Right away, Bob. We'll camp here."

"Coo-ee-e!" called Bob, as he dropped lightly from his horse. He raised his voice once more, in a different kind of cry, well known to the herdsmen, but he did not have to repeat it. Replies came at once from several other directions, as well as from the echoing mountain.

(To be continued.)

IN A RING OF FIRE.

By F. H. KELLOGG.



"ALL THAT WAS VISIBLE WAS TWO HORSES' HEADS, AND TWO MEN APPARENTLY SEATED ON THE WATER."

For years I had hoped to visit the Indian Territory before the rush of homesteaders had settled the country to such an extent as to put an end to the native wildness of the region and people. My opportunity came at last, and during a certain September vacation the trip was made. The experience of the first day was enough to convince me that the place was still wild enough to satisfy any one in search of the uncivilized.

With an Indian trader, his wife, and little boy, I left Arkansas City one morning at about ten o'clock. After an hour's ride we alighted from the train at Ponca, a station on the Ponca reservation. There we expected to find a light wagon in which to finish our journey; for our

destination, Kama-hatsa (Gray Horse), was about thirty miles from this, the nearest railroad-station. After a wait of an hour longer, our friend arrived with the conveyance, and just at noon we started on our ride across the country. Soon we reached the Arkansas River. Although recently swollen, it was apparently fordable, and we started to cross. Had not our driver been well acquainted with the river our trip would have abruptly terminated there. We drove up, then down, then across. At times the water ran into the body of the wagon; again we were in a quicksand, and the horses plunged and staggered. The wheels would grind and grate over the sand, the wagon would roll and toss until we were almost

thrown out, and then, with a sudden lurch, all would come right side up again, and we would move on.

We had just reached the opposite bank when, looking back, we saw two men in a wagon rather smaller than the one in which we were riding and drawn by a team of little Indian ponies. They had just struck the deep channel, and the horses, all covered but their heads, were struggling along, sometimes swimming, sometimes just getting a foothold. Their wagon also was covered, so that all that was visible was two horses' heads, and then, just behind them, the two men apparently seated upon the water. We soon forgot our former fright in watching them; for, though we sympathized with them, it was really a ludicrous sight.

Driving across the bottom-land, we passed

through seas of grass which was higher than our heads, even as we sat in the wagon. The sudden gusts of wind set the grass to bowing and bending; the tall sunflowers welcomed us with polite "salaams," but the long whip-like lashes of the wire-grass gave stinging cuts across our faces.

A dim haziness spreading over the sky now attracted our attention, and I felt a sudden sinking of the heart as I remembered that this was the season when the great prairie-fires are common. In such a place as that a fire meant certain death. The haze assumed a reddish tinge, the air seemed oppressive and stifling, and we knew that danger was near. We hoped we might avoid the direct path of the flames, but the hope was a faint one, for the whole country seemed to be ablaze. As



"WE DASHED THROUGH THE LINE OF FLAME." (See page 144.)

far as the eye could see, dense columns of smoke showed the presence of the fire, in all directions.

We whipped up the horses and drove toward the upland, thinking thus to escape the greatest danger. We reached the high ground before meeting any flame, and we were greatly rejoiced to see that much of the grass was still fairly green here, though thickly bestrewn with patches of longer grass that was dry.

The fierce flames now approached, rushing along with furious speed, crackling and snapping—the sound alone being sufficient to strike terror to the stoutest heart. Galloping along the line of fire, we found that where it crossed a little ravine the flames were not so high, for the grass was quite green there. We dashed through the line of flame, suffering brief tortures of suffocation, and a severe stinging and smarting of our eyes, caused by the intense heat and pungent smoke.

Once through, we congratulated ourselves on the hope that we should yet escape; for, going in this direction, right in the teeth of the wind, we could travel more rapidly than the pursuing flames.

While passing through the fire, I recalled the proverb "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," for just in advance of the line of flame clouds of swallows darted here and there, catching the hosts of insects started up by the heat of the burning grass.

We now heard galloping hoofs, and we soon saw two Indians (Osages) approaching through the smoke. "Where are you going?" they asked, in their own language. "To Gray Horse," our driver replied, in the same tongue. They told him that the prairie was a mass of flame in that direction, and that we must go back. We responded that all was flame in *that* direction. Notwithstanding the indifference to danger usually ascribed to redskins, these Indians showed unmistakable signs of terror. Some further quick conversation informed us that they, like ourselves, had seized an opportunity to penetrate the line of flame, thinking thus to escape.

We all were now inclosed in a gradually narrowing ring of fire. To clear the space around us by burning off the grass—to start a

"back-fire," as it is called—was our only chance for safety; and this we attempted. A large space was cleared before the oncoming fire reached us. We hoped to escape with but singed eyebrows, and a few moments of suffocation; and this we would have considered a fortunate deliverance. But we found our last chance failing us. The back-fire we had started against the wind had burned only the dry grass, and in doing this had served as a furnace to dry the greener grass. Thus the prairie-fire, reaching our burned district, found the greener grasses killed and dried, and hence had almost as much fuel as outside.

The fire was now close around us. The varying currents of air heated by the flame whirled and rose, and gusts of cold air, rushing in to replace the hot air, caused a whirlwind, and a great well of smoke and flame was thus formed. Within this well we stood, as yet unharmed and with a constant supply of cool air, but expecting death.

It was a dreadful moment: the mother and child were crying, the Indians, with uplifted arms, were calling upon the Great Spirit, in a weird chant.

Suddenly we felt an unusually strong rush of cold air from one side, and looking up, I saw a strange and welcome sight. A long tongue of flame had run toward and into our circular prison from the main fire, and had burned a lane from the outlying burnt area in to us. Through this lane, formed by walls of fire, came rushing in a current of cold, clear air. This kept the smoke blown away, and we saw plainly the path of escape thus providentially afforded us, when all hope seemed gone.

Our horses had been paralyzed with fear, and had hardly moved a muscle after the near approach of the flames. Now they could not be induced to move. But quicker than thought each Indian cast off his blanket, and enveloped his horse's head. Then they grasped the bridles, jumped upon the horses' backs, and dashed out through the avenue of escape that had opened before us. We followed, with a rush, and soon found ourselves in safety.

The Indians rode rapidly away, staying for neither thanks nor presents. It was with



"THE INDIANS, WITH UPLIFTED ARMS, WERE CALLING UPON THE GREAT SPIRIT, IN A WEIRD CHANT."

thankful hearts that we drove into Gray runner of what was to come, I would have Horse, about ten o'clock that night; and I been wiser to leave "wild scenes" to those thought that if my first experience was a fore- better fitted to cope with them.

THE PERSIAN COLUMBUS.

(An Oriental Fantasy.)

BY JACK BENNETT.

ONE sultry summer evening in the eight hundred and seventieth year of the Mohammedan era, the renowned Caliph Haroun Al Huck-El-Berri, of Bagdad, sat frowning amid his magnificence.

The royal divan was fashioned of ruddy gold, thick-studded with virgin pearls. Overhead was an exquisite carved dome of ivory and ebony, radiant with the rosy glow of swaying brazen lamps and tall wax candles. Rich carpets of silk and velvet were scattered over the jasper floor, which reflected the alabaster columns. Tables inlaid with mother-of-pearl were spread with rare and aromatic viands, while the shimmering breezes were cooled and faintly perfumed by fountains of rose-water.

But, in spite of all this surrounding splendor, the Caliph of Bagdad was unmistakably as cross as two sticks, and champed his teeth savagely.

Through the open windows stole the silvery song of the nightingale and the sleepy trill of the belated bulbul in the orange-grove beyond the courtyard; and from the high gallery entrancing strains of music swept, above which arose the mellow snore of the Grand Vizir, snoozing among the damask cushions, with a copy of the Bagdad *Herald* over his face.

And yet, with a fierce frown upon his pale brow, the Caliph pored over the dog-eared pages of his primary geography.

Suddenly he closed the book with a bang.

"By the six white hairs upon the tail of the Prophet's mule!" quoth he, "these be strange tales indeed that the unlettered gïaours of the West are telling the wise men of the East! Can it be possible that the whole Persian system of eclectic geography is in error? I must investigate this matter. Selim!" he cried imperiously to the Grand Vizir, who scrambled to his sleepy feet with a frightened start, "summon the Seven Sages of Bagdad and the Commissioner of Public Schools!"

The Sages were summoned instantly.

"Bah! You high-salaried indolents!" sternly hissed the Caliph, "I 've a great notion to discharge you all! Are n't you ashamed to let the pale-faced Franks of Spain get ahead of you?"

"Illustrious Sun of the Noonday!" faltered the oldest among them, "what means this sudden tempest out of a clear sky? The Frankish philosophers do not know even the things that we have forgotten. They are but followers in our footsteps. We have taught them all they know."

"Oh, have you?" roared the Caliph. "Perhaps, then, ye knew that the world is round?"

"Oh, your Majesty!" gasped the Sages in chorus, hurriedly endeavoring to restore their paralyzed faculties with their smelling-salts, "what sort of a fairy-tale is this?"

"Fairy-tale!" roared the Caliph. "Marry, come up! Don't ye ever read the newspapers? Have ye not heard that there has arisen in the West a wild, strange, white-haired man who saith that the world is round like an orange or a ball? If ye did not know it, why have ye not found it out long ago? And if ye did know it, why have ye not told me of it before this? Tell me," cried the Caliph in an awful, blood-curdling tone, "tell me, ye ignoramuses, is the world round or flat?"

The Sages fell prostrate upon the gleaming floor, and bumped their aged heads against the tiles in despair. This riddle was too much for them; they had to give it up.

With a cruel glitter in his eagle eye the Caliph cried to the Chief Chamberlain: "Has-san, lock these gentlemen up in the pantry instantly, and be very careful that not one escapes. I will give them fifteen minutes in which to tell me positively whether the world be round or flat, or give some immediately practicable method of finding out."

The massive, burnished copper door closed with a dismal clang upon the unfortunate and despairing Sages; while the School Commissioner, arriving just in time to hear the latter part of the conversation from the hall-door, took to his heels, and did not stop until he was three miles beyond the city limits and hidden under a haystack.

Then the court waited in ominous silence, as the sand in the hour-glass trickled out the swiftly passing moments. The horizon began to look very squally for the Seven Sages of Bagdad.

said the Vizir, warily refusing to commit himself further. "I see clearly."

"Well then?" said the Caliph, expectantly, looking at Selim.

"Well then?" said Selim, dubiously, looking at the Caliph, and edging toward the door.

"Pshaw! Thou dolt! Dost thou not see that if this world be indeed round like this orange, a man may ride around it and return whence he started? Bismillah! I have solved the problem myself! Aha! I will fool these laggard, hesitating Franks; and while King Ferdinand hesitates to furnish funds for a fleet,



"TELL ME, YE IGNORAMUSES," SAID THE CALIPH, "IS THE WORLD ROUND OR FLAT?"

The Caliph sat sullenly upon the divan, playing with an orange. Suddenly he gave a start, and an immense white smile illuminated his swarthy features. "Selim!" he called, "look here, my boy! If this world be indeed round, as this imaginative mariner from Genoa declares, it will not be so difficult to prove, methinks."

The Vizir eyed the Caliph with suspicion.

"If I begin here," continued the Caliph, placing his index finger upon the orange, "and move onward, my finger soon passes completely around the orange and returns to the point whence it started. Dost thou see?"

"Verily, your majesty, I am not blind!"

I will show this audacious Christoval Colon that he is but a semicolon after all. I will ride about the world myself, this very night, and thou shalt go with me, Selim; thou shalt go with me, and we will ride around the world! Make haste, and call up the camels. Hurrah! We are going around the world!"

"Oh, we are, are we?" muttered Selim, with chattering teeth, as he hurriedly shuffled down the back stairs to the stable, to harness up the royal equipage. "Around the world, indeed? Who wants to fall over the edge into nothing? Not Selim! Well, I should say not! Not if Selim knows it!"

Then followed a scene of wild excitement,

some hurrying hither and thither, some scurrying backward and forward, some running round and round, and some running nowhere at all; while hoarse voices shouted, camels snorted, horses neighed, and countless dogs barked until the whole city was in an uproar. Drums beat, spears swayed madly overhead, standards flapped frantically upon their swaying staves, dark faces gleamed with savage excitement from under snowy turbans. And then came a wilder clang from the deafening cymbals, a louder fanfare from the brazen-throated trumpets, and a mighty shout from the throats of the excited populace. "Hail to the Caliph! Hail, all hail! For he is going around the world!"

The royal band then struck up "Marching Through Persia," the small boys turned cart-wheels along the gutter, and the procession moved on through the streets of Bagdad.

Beyond the city gates the caravan halted.

"Your royal highness," asked Selim the Vizir, "which way shall we start—north, east, south, or west?"

"Hum—m—m!" mused the Caliph, stroking his beard thoughtfully, and getting out his railroad map of the Eastern Hemisphere.

"Hum—m—m!" resumed the Caliph, after a short study, "we will not go to the west; for Ferdinand and Isabella would be sure to see us marching past their house, and I want to surprise them by getting all the way around before they know anything about it. And we will not go to the east, because we should get too close to the sun when it rises in the morning, and might perhaps be sunstruck. And if we go to the south we shall have to ford the Indian Ocean. But I don't like to wade, and the stones hurt my bare feet, so I think we won't go south. Hum—m—m!"



"IF THE WORLD BE INDEED ROUND, A MAN MAY RIDE AROUND IT!"

That leaves only one other direction to go! Well then, we will go in that direction. Ho, Gaifar!" he called with a ringing voice to the drum-major at the head of the procession, "March straight for the North Star!"

Then he went sound asleep, as Gaifar tossed his baton high in the air, caught it as it fell, gave a triple flip-flap to the right, a double flub-dub to the left, and thirteen twirls around his little finger. The band struck up, and the cavalcade headed across the broad, sandy plain, straight for the North Star.

As the hills along the horizon drew nearer and nearer, the Grand Vizir broke into a cold perspiration. As he stood erect, craning his long neck above the clouds of dust, he could see the far sky curve down, down, down on the other side of those purple mountain-peaks. "Ugh—h—h!" he gasped, with a shudder of terror. "Something must be done, and right away, too! There is the end of the world, and we'll all fall off and be smashed, sure!"

Galloping in palpitating haste to the side of the drum-major, he whispered with terrible impressiveness, "Gaifar, what do you know about astronomy?"

"I? Nothing!" said Gaifar, surprised.

"Oo—oo—ooh!" groaned the Vizir, pull-

ing a long face, "I should not like to be in your shoes when the Caliph wakes!"

"Why not?" cried Gaifar, anxiously.

But the crafty Vizir made no reply.

"Gaifar," he whispered sepulchraly again, "did you ever study bacteriology?"

"N—no," gasped Gaifar, with startled eyes.

The Vizir groaned again in such an awful tone that it chilled the very marrow of the poor drum-major's bones.

"Oo-oo-oo-oh!" groaned the Vizir, until Gaifar fairly shook in his buckled shoes. "You will never be able to keep us all from falling off the under side of earth into nowhere when we go over the edge!"

"What can I do?" moaned Gaifar, piteously.

"Humph!" chuckled the Vizir. "Just give me your baton, and go climb up into the band-wagon and help beat the bass-drum. I will lead this procession myself."

With a sigh of relief Gaifar slunk out of sight, and the Vizir waved the baton aloft with a crafty look in his eye. Tramp, tramp, tramp, went the horses' hoofs. Puff, puff, puff, strode the cushioned camels through the sand. But the Caliph slept like a top through it all. He was not going to let a little thing like riding around the world interfere with his regular sleep. Not he! But the sly Vizir, ever wildly waving his baton, shouting, "Onward, en avant, vorwärts!" and inciting haste, until every one behind him in the procession was utterly blinded by the choking dust, swept out of the beaten track in a great curve, round and round, so gradually, so very gradually, that not one noticed it—round and round until, after describing an immense semicircle through the

plain, the caravan again faced the North Star, and, from the other side of the city, was actually marching straight back into Bagdad.

At this juncture the first-cornet player of the band stubbed his toe. In his excitement he blew a blast so loud, so shrill, and so discordant that it pierced the ears of the Caliph. Waking with a start, he looked about him, dazed. Then perceiving the minarets of the city, he called furiously for the Grand Vizir, who answered on a gallop.

"Thou dog, why hast thou dared to disobey my command?" thundered the Caliph.

"Disobey thy command, Sire? What dost thou mean?" exclaimed the Vizir, with well-simulated amazement.

"What do I mean? What do I mean?" screamed the Caliph. "Why are we marching toward Bagdad, you villain?"

"Bagdad? Bagdad?" said the Vizir, looking at the Caliph as if in great surprise at the



"THE VIZIR WAVED THE BATON ALOFT."

question. "Why, your royal highness, we sighted Bagdad a good three hours ago. We must be pretty nearly around the world!"

"Goodness gracious me!" cried the Caliph, in a fever of excitement. "You don't say so? Why did n't you wake me up when we were down on the under side? I might have fallen and disarranged some of the stars! Why, Selim," he exclaimed enthusiastically, looking at his watch, "we shall be back to Bagdad in time for breakfast!"

"Indeed?" said the Vizir, with a smile that meant as much as four ordinary smiles. "Why,

And the townspeople, wakened out of their sound slumbers by the sound of the shouting, plunged into their trousers in fright, threw up their windows, hurled back the shutters, and asked where the fire was, until, learning the cause of the uproar, all Bagdad joined in a mighty shout of acclaim, "Hail to the Caliph! Hail! For the world is round, and he has ridden around it!"

Instantly, upon reaching the palace, the



THE RETURN TO BAGDAD.

that is so! Even now, methinks, I hear the Bagdad town-clock striking four o'clock in the morning."

As he spoke the far-away boom of the great bell tolled across the plain, and the roosters began to crow in the barn-yards along the way.

Just as day dawned in the East the head of the procession entered the great gate of Bagdad in triumph, the Caliph and the Grand Vizir riding in state, behind snow-white palfreys; while far in advance ran heralds shouting in stentorian voices, "Make way for the Caliph! For the world is round, and he has ridden around it! Way for the Caliph!"

Caliph in exultation called for his swiftest messengers and despatched them to the geography publishers with the amazing tidings. "Tell them," said he, "that the world is round and ridgy like a muskmelon; and that Persia runs completely around it in one direction, and pretty nearly around it in the other!"

"Now," sighed the Caliph, with a satisfied smile, "we will have our breakfast."

"And, your royal highness," murmured the Vizir, "perhaps it might not be a bad idea, as a celebration of your achievement, to let the Seven Sages out of the pantry, so that they may hear that the world is round."

A Year with Dolly

By Eudora S. Bumstead.

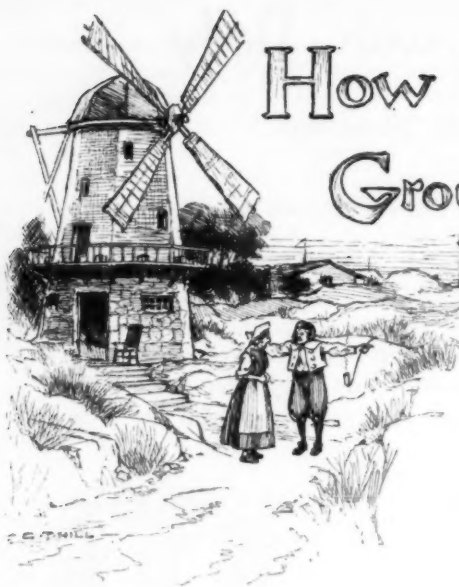


Doctor Mama knows what to do
When girls and dollies are troubled;
With needle and thread and a bottle of glue
My Dolly's strength she has doubled.
But she never can make her new and bright;
I'm almost ashamed to show her. -
If Santa Claus could see her to-night
I don't suppose he would know her.



Mama has said if I learn to be
A careful, kind little mother,
He surely will notice the change in me,
And maybe he'll bring me another;
But, dear little Dolly, you need not care
Nor be jealous one bit if I get her,
For tho' you may never be quite so fair,
I'll only love you the better.

Jack
9



How Hinkadepenk Ground the Corn.

(A Dutch Child-song.)

I.

HINKADEPENK

Set up de klenk—

Tivy rivy teckaras denk.

He came to the windmill. "Wife," said he,
"No wind comes over the Zuyder Zee;
Go up and whirl the mill-wheel round
Till the corn is ground—the corn is ground."

So Hinkadepenk

Set up de klenk—

Tivy rivy teckaras denk.

II.

Then up she went, the wheels went round,
The corn was ground—the corn was ground;
The night came on, the day was done,
Still round and round the mill-wheel spun,
And Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk—
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



III.

She ground all night, she ground all day—
In piles around the meal-sacks lay;
And none of all the folks could tell
How she ground so fast, and ground so well.

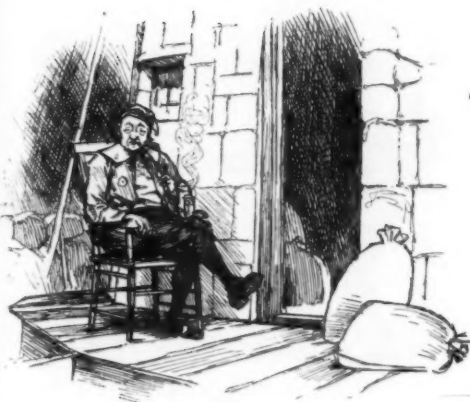
So Hinkadepenk

Set up de klenk—

Tivy rivy teckaras denk.

IV.

He sat at ease by the windmill door,
And smoked his meerschaum o'er and o'er:
"Wife! look over the Zuyder Zee—
What do you see—what do you see?"
So Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk—
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



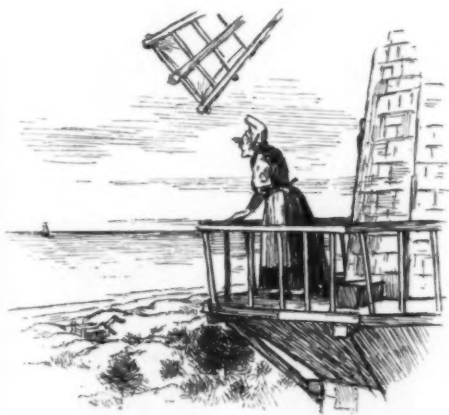
V.

"I see a ship like a little speck;
A gallant Prince is on the deck.
The sea is still—there is no blast,
Yet the ship sails fast—the ship sails fast."
So Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk—
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



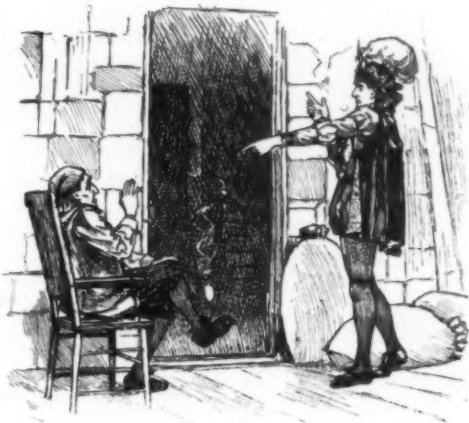
VI.

On the sandy beach, so bare and brown,
The Prince leaped down—the Prince leaped
down;
He came and stood by the windmill door,
And Hinkadepenk was frightened sore.
So Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk—
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



VII.

For the Prince in a voice of anger spoke—
"You sit and smoke! You sit and smoke!
From morn till night, from night till morn,
Your poor old wife grinds all the corn!"
So Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk—
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



VIII.

Then Hinkadepenk he took by the hand,
And danced him a jig through all the land;
From Rotterdam to the far Voornè —
Like the wind went he—like the wind went he.

And Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk —
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



IX.

He danced him up and he danced
him down,
Through Haarlem town and Zaan-
dem town—
Over the meadows and over the
sand,
From land to sea and from sea to
the land.

And Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk —
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



X.

And he fell down flat on the wooden floor,
When the Prince led him back to the wind-
mill door.

His pipe was broken, his coat was torn,
His face forlorn—his face forlorn—

Then Hinkadepenk
Set up de klenk —
Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



XI.

"Go up," said the Prince, "and grind for
your life,

And give some rest to your poor old wife!

If ever again I come to the mill,

You 'll take a journey longer still!"

So Hinkadepenk

Set up de klenk—

Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



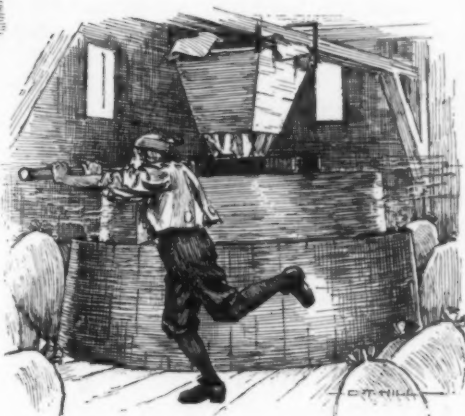
XII.

His wife, an easy life leads she,
As she sits and looks on the Zuyder Zee—
For Hinkadepenk went up in the mill
To grind the corn, and he 's grinding still.

So Hinkadepenk

Set up de klenk—

Tivy rivy teckaras denk.



XIII.

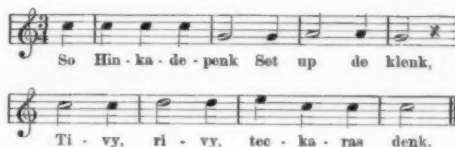
From morn till night, from night till morn,
He is grinding corn—he is grinding corn;
He fears to stop forevermore,
Lest the Prince should come to the wind-
mill door.

So Hinkadepenk

Set up de klenk—

Tivy rivy teckaras denk.

CHORUS.





JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

"Don't you think December's
Pleasanter than May?"

THE Little Schoolma'am says a well-known poet, Mr. T. B. Aldrich by name, has put this question to you young folk in some cheery verses, and left you to settle it for yourselves. Answer it as pleases you, my dears,—not forgetting that if May has the bloom o' the year and the flowers, and the rosy blossoms glowing in the sun, December has the gleaming frost, the snow and ice, and the beautiful Christmas-tide—the one great Day of all days; the season when the joy of giving illumines everything and everybody. Happy, indeed, should be the month that holds Christmas in its heart.

But, as to that question of May and December, my birds have something to say, I find. Here is a little confab about it between the bluebird and the sparrow, faithfully reported for you—and in verse, too—by our friend, Margaret Vandegrift:

A WINTER RESORT.

"ARE N'T you going South?" said the bluebird to the sparrow.

"Winter's almost here, and we're clearing up to go. Not a seed is left on the goldenrod or yarrow, And I heard the farmer say, 'It feels like snow!' I can recommend it, the place to which we're going; There's a rainy season, to be sure, but what of that? Not a bit of ice, and it never thinks of snowing, And the fruit so plentiful one can't help getting fat!"

"Yes, I've heard about it," to the bluebird said the sparrow;

"And it's quite the fashion to go traveling, I know; People who don't do it are looked upon as 'narrow.' Bless you! I don't care! And I'm not afraid of snow."

When it comes the first time, I so enjoy my feathers;
After that I'm used to it, and do not mind at all.
One can fly about, and keep warm so in all weathers;
I've a snugger, too, in the ivy on the wall.

"When the seeds are gone—and they're not before
December—

I can still find spiders and flies on sunny days;
And I've all the lovely summer to remember;
My old friends are here, and they know my little ways.
Just as soon as ever the ground is frozen tightly,
All those nice kind creatures in the houses throw us
crumbs.

One forgets it's winter, when the sun is shining
brightly.

I'm content to stay here, and take it as it comes."

CHOOSE YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT.

DEAR JACK: Here is a picture that may be used to discover what your friends would like for Christmas, without letting them know that you have found out their preferences.

Copy upon separate cards this series of names:

Jewel-case, 1. Cane, 2. Fishing-tackle, 3. Hoop, 4. Rattle, 5. Velocipede, 6. Jack-straws, 7. Rocking-horse, 8. Lawn-tennis set, 9. Air-balloon, 10.	Gold watch, 1. Pocket-book, 2. Air-gun, 3. Wax doll, 4. Flannel rabbit, 5. Battledore and shuttlecock, 7. Whip, 8. Writing-desk, 9. Blow-gun, 10.	Cologne, 1. Driving-gloves, 2. Bat and ball, 3. Set of toy furniture, 4. Milk-pitcher, 5. Tin sword, 6. Cup and ball, 7. Roller-skates, 8. Box of water-colors, 9. China doll, 10.
Inkstand, 1. Foils, 2. Foot-ball, 3. Doll's carriage, 4. Lace cup, 5. Belt, 6. Dissected map, 7. Picture-book, 8. Opera-glasses, 9. Drum, 10.	Diary, 1. Boxing-gloves, 2. Camera, 3. Play-house, 4. Little bracelets, 5. Marbles, 6. Paper dolls, 7. Toy soldiers, 8. Smelling-bottle, 9. Elastic ball, 10.	Brooch, 1. Shot-gun, 2. Box of tools, 3. Kaleidoscope, 4. Necklace, 5. Tops, 6. Toy piano, 7. Wagon, 8. Lace handkerchief, 9. Funny little toy monkey, 10.
Umbrella, 1. Silk hat, 2. Printing-press, 3. Doll's tea-set, 4. Silver spoon, 5. Kite, 6. Skipping-rope, 7. Bow-gun, 8. Parasol, 9. Goat, 10.	Ear-rings, 1. Ullster, 2. Canoe, 3. Scarf, 4. Baby jumper, 5. Rubber boots, 6. Toy stove, 7. Humming-top, 8. Chatelaine, 9. Hobby-horse, 10.	Gloves, 1. Blackening outfit, 2. Skates, 3. Sewing-case, 4. Little chair, 5. Helmet, 6. Tricycle, 7. Bicycle, 8. Toilet set, 9. India-rubber toys, 10.
Card-case, 1. Dress-suit, 2. Story-book, 3. Doll's wardrobe, 4. Baby carriage, 5.	Noah's ark, 6. Pug-dog, 7. Roller-skates, 8. Fan, 9. Jumping-jack, 10.	

Take a set of ten envelopes and mark them A, B, C, and so on up to J—one letter to each envelop.

Now your friend selects a card that contains the name of the present he prefers, places the card in the envelop marked with the initial of the last present named on that card, and places the envelop on the picture with a corner touching that stocking which is in the same order (from left to right) as his chosen present is in the list on the card he has selected.

Thus, there are on each card 10 presents, and there are 10 stockings. If he has chosen the third present he puts the envelop touching the third stocking; fifth present, fifth stocking.

The second series of cards, which here follows,

Jewel-case. Gold watch. Cologne. Inkstand. Diary. Brooch. Umbrella. Ear-rings. Gloves. Card-case.	Cane. Pocket-book. Driving-gloves. Fois. Boxing-gloves. Shot-gun. Silk hat. Ulster. Hacking outfit. Dress-suit.	Fishing-tackle. Air-gun. Bat and ball. Foot-ball. Camera. Box of tools. Printing-press. Canoe. Skates. Story-book.	Rocking-horse. Whip. Roller-skates. Picture-book. Toy soldiers. Wagon. Bow-gun. Humming-top. Bicycle. Roller-skates.	Lawn-tennis set. Writing-desk. Box of water-colors. Opera-glasses. Smelling-bottle. Lace handkerchief. Parasol. Chatelaine. Toilet set. Fan.	Air-balloon. Blow-gun. China doll. Drum. Elastic ball. Funny little toy monkey. Goat. Hobby-horse. India-rubber toys. Jumping-jack.
Hoop. Wax doll. Set of toy furniture. Doll's carriage. Play-house. Kaleidoscope. Doll's tea-set. Scarf. Sewing-case. Doll's wardrobe.	Rattle. Flannel rabbit. Milk-pitcher. Lace cap. Little bracelets. Necklace. Silver spoon. Baby jumper. Little chair. Baby carriage.	Velocipede. Toy boat. Tin sword. Belt. Marbles. Tops. Kite. Rubber boots. Helmet. Noah's ark.			
Jack-straws. Battledore and shuttlecock. Cup and ball.	Dissected map. Paper dolls. Toy piano.	Skipping-rope. Toy stove. Tricycle. Pug-dog.			

is your secret key. The stocking chosen tells you which key card to consult, and the envelop letter tells you which on that card has been chosen,—A being 1; B, 2; and so on. Envelop G, near the sixth stocking, would mean seventh present on sixth card, and so on. You need not explain the trick, but can tell your friends mysteriously that Santa Claus will know what they want if they will only follow directions. Yours truly, J. C. BEARD.



THE LETTER-BOX.

IN the September number of ST. NICHOLAS the picture on page 824, entitled "Hickory Dickory Dock," was wrongly credited in the Contents to Mrs. Dorothea Lummis. At Mrs. Lummis's request we gladly correct the error, and give the credit to Miss Lucie B. Salter, of Portsmouth, N. H., who made the original photograph from which our picture is engraved.

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little girl of twelve years old, who lives 'way out in Russia. I am an American, not a Russian. We have lived here in St. Petersburg for seven years, but we are going home next autumn.

We have n't very many pets, but some of them are very funny. We have got a dog, but he is very old now; he used to be great fun. Then we have two young rabbits, two guinea-pigs, and three birds.

We have taken you for a very long time, and I have only once seen a letter from St. Petersburg, and that was written by my brother.

In summer we live out of town, and have very good boating, bathing, and driving.

I don't go to school, but have lessons at home with a governess, and learn four languages: Russian, German, French, and English; but Russian is by far the hardest.

I have been collecting stamps over two years, and have got nearly a thousand.

I remain your loving reader, A. R.—

WEST POINT, N. Y.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little girl, twelve years old, and my father is in the army.

This is a very beautiful place, and a great many people visit here in summer. Some of the objects of interest are the library, riding-hall, and gymnasium. There is also a little point containing trophies of the wars, which is called Trophy Point. From our house we have a beautiful view of the Hudson and Constitution Island, where Miss Warner lives.

I am your constant reader, HELEN L. K.—

WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a page in the Senate, and am on duty at the Capitol from 9 A. M. until the Senate adjourns, which is about 5 or half-past 5 P. M., or earlier when there is not much business on hand.

From a few minutes after 9 until 12 noon, there is nothing much for us to do, but after 12, which is the hour the Senate meets, until it adjourns, we have plenty of work attending to the Senators' wants and going on errands.

A good many of the pages — there are fifteen — are getting autograph-books filled, for themselves or friends; and just before the session — we cannot get them after the Senate meets — you can see the boys, with books big as themselves, sometimes, going round to the Senators to get them to write in them.

A good while ago some of us organized a mock sen-

ate, and we used to go up behind the "document-room," where all the books and papers of the Senate are kept. We used to hold sessions and make speeches without number up there among the documents, until at last we grew tired of it, and adjourned it "sine die," or forever.

Please receive the best wishes from
Your devoted reader, "V."

U. S. LIGHTHOUSE-TENDER "LILY,"

ST. LOUIS, MO.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have taken you so long now, I do not think I could get along without you. Papa gave you to me for Christmas when I was a wee girl, and now I am fourteen, and wherever we go I have my ST. NICHOLAS. Just before we left the Norfolk Navy-yard two years ago I wrote you a letter, and when papa came out here as Lighthouse Inspector, my ST. NICHOLAS was forwarded to me and my letter was in it, and papa and mama were so surprised, for they did not know I had written. We expect to be out here one year more. I spend my vacations on the "Lily" — the lighthouse-tender. Did you know that all but two or three of the tenders are called after the different flowers? The "Lily" goes from Cairo, Ill., to St. Paul, Minn., and from St. Louis to Kansas City, and St. Louis to La Salle, Ill., so we go over about eighteen hundred miles of river, including the Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois rivers. We see some very queer people and funny places. I am at boarding-school from September until June. We still have our parrot and canary I wrote about two years ago, and now a mocking-bird. We start for St. Paul the day after to-morrow, and it will take us just about a month or a little over to make the trip, as we always have to move, paint, and repair the lights or beacons. Does it not seem ridiculous that a lighthouse should be nothing but a pole stuck in the ground and made firm with three sticks or braces, and a pair of steps to reach a small shelf that holds the lantern, which is lighted each night by the keeper? The keepers get from eight to fifteen dollars per month; some of the keepers are intelligent men, while others are very ignorant; but they are all glad to get the money for keeping the lights.

Your devoted reader, N. V. W.

PARIS, FRANCE.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: This is the second time I write to you, to say how much I like your journal, it is so full of pretty stories and pictures. I like the story of "Two Girls and a Boy" more than I can say. I like also to read the letters of your little subscribers, they are so well written. Indeed, I have no book or "review" so interesting and amusing as yours.

Each time I receive ST. NICHOLAS, it is in the middle of my English lesson; so I can't open it just at that moment; but I cannot express my joy when sometimes my mistress permits me to open it as a reward; so pleased I am when I have this permission. Good-by, dear ST. NICHOLAS.

Your little subscriber,
MADELEINE G—.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE NOVEMBER NUMBER

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA. Beethoven.

ANAGRAM. Thomas Babington Macaulay.

DIAMONDS CONNECTED BY A CENTRAL SQUARE. I. 1. R. 2. Lad.
 3. Laden. 4. Radical. 5. Decay. 6. Nay. 7. L. II. 1. G. 2. Mew.
 3. Minor. 4. General. 5. Worry. 6. Ray. 7. L. III. 1. Salad.
 3. Anise. 3. Limit. 4. Aside. 5. Deter. IV. 1. T. 2. Net.
 3. Negus. 4. Tegular. 5. Tulip. 6. Sap. 7. R. V. 1. T. 2. Orb.
 3. Odium. 4. Trivial. 5. Build. 6. Mad. 7. L.

ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER were received, before September 15th, from Paul Reese — Maude E. Palmer — "Xelis" — G. B. Dyer — Grace V. Morris — Mama, Katie, and Jamie — Josephine Sherwood — Jo and I — Uncle Mung — Adele, Jack, and George A. — A. W. A., S. W. A., W. W. A., and A. P. C. A. — "December and May" — "Wareham" — No Name, Minneapolis.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER were received, before September 15th, from "Hieroglyphics," 11—"Bald Head," 1—"Rosalie Bloomingdale," 11—"Matilda W. Bailey," 1—"Berkshire," 2—"M. and L.," 2—"Elaine S.," 1—"Marion and Carrie C.," 1—"The McG's.," 11—"Helen A. Ely," 3—"Adele Wohlrich," 1—"Edith Totten," 1—"Jamie A. M. and Mama," 4—"Arthur B. Cook," 1—"Gertrude Kerr," 1—"Sadie R. S.," 3—"Chestrnut," 5—"Evelyn de Zouche," 2—"L. H. K.," 1—"Clara W.," 1—"May Martin," 1—"Louise and Helen Freeman," 1—"Charlie D. Harmon," 1—"Marion Alice Perkins," 4—"Crew of the Sunshine," 1—"Coody and Katharine Van Coughnet," 1—"Mama and Harry," 5—"E. M. G.," 10—"Evelyn de Zouche," 1—"Bubbles," 4—"Nellie Archer," 4—"Willie H.," 2—"Effie K. Talboys," 7—"V.," 2—"N. J. Borden," 3—"Melville Hunnewell," 3—"Nellie L. Howes," 8—"Ida C. Thallon," 11—"M. Elizabeth Breed," 1—"A. C. H.," 1—"Clifford S. Gills," 10—"Chambers and Fred," 11—"Miriam Binyay," 1—"Charles," 9—"M. and Laura M.," 4—"L. E. Tutton," 1—"Miss Bertha," 1—"E. L. Chapman," 1—"Charlotte C. Moses," 1—"Julia Johnson," 1—"Dora F. Hereford," 3—"Highmont Girls," 7—"Ethel Wright," 1—"Agnes C. Leaycraft," 2—"Ella B. Lyon," 2—"May and '79," 7—"H. H. and L. O.," 5—"Infantry," 11—"We Girls," 8—"Mama and Lillie," 2—"Rachel Greene," 2.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

My primals name one of the Fates, and my finals, the wife of Orpheus.

CROSS-WORDS (of equal length): 1. Unrestrained.
2. Farewell. 3. To provide food. 4. A masculine
name. 5. Finished. 6. A famous mountain. 7. A
masculine name. 8. To allay. "CLIO."

CONNECTED SQUARES.

The diagram shows a 2D hexagonal lattice of atoms (solid circles) and interstitial sites (open circles). A central atom is labeled 'A'. A path of interstitial sites is highlighted with a dashed line, starting from a site labeled 'B' and moving towards the right. The lattice is bounded by a dashed line on the right side.

1. UPPER LEFT-HAND SQUARE: 1. A junto. 2. A large South American serpent. 3. Makes a round hole through. 4. A catkin. 5. Remains.

CUNE. From 1 to 2, declare; 1 to 3, deposit; 2 to 4, exalted; 3 to 4, thyroid; 5 to 6, scooper; 5 to 7, spangle; 6 to 8, regress; 7 to 8, emblems; 1 to 5, dais; 2 to 6, Emir; 4 to 8, dubs; 3 to 7, tame.

NUMERICAL ENIGMA. "Justice is often pale and melancholy ; but Gratitude, her daughter, is constantly in the flow of spirits and the bloom of loveliness."

Pi. Dear autumn days, so calm, so sweet,
Like a bright, welcome memory you seem ;
So full of tremulous and hazy light,
So soft, so radiant, so like a dream.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC. Primals, Jupiter; finals, Neptune. Cross-words: 1. Jacobin. 2. Unaware. 3. Parsnip. 4. Implant. 5. Tableau. 6. Erasion. 7. Restore.

5. Sewer. Two first words, operameter.

II. UPPER RIGHT-HAND SQUARE: 1. To speak foolishly. 2. A large bird. 3. To turn aside. 4. Concise. 5. To be admitted to.

III. CENTRAL SQUARE: 1. A valley or low place. 2. Something that Otway says was made "to temper man." 3. To modify in any way for the better. 4. A spear carried by horsemen. 5. A finisher.

IV. LOWER LEFT-HAND SQUARE: 1. Speed. 2. One of the Mohammedan nobility of Afghanistan and Scinde. 3. A smoker's delight. 4. To annoy. 5. Deviated from the true course.

V. LOWER RIGHT-HAND SQUARE: 1. An animal allied to the civet. 2. Benefit. 3. Satisfied. 4. A continued attempt to gain possession. 5. Prior in years.

F. S. F.

ZIGZAG.

ALL of the words described contain the same number of letters. When these are rightly guessed and placed one below another, in the order here given, the zigzag, beginning at the upper left-hand letter, will spell four words.

CROSS-WORDS: 1. Hydromel. 2. Predilection. 3. A small, flat-bottomed rowboat. 4. To fix firmly. 5. Circulates rapidly. 6. The culmination. 7. To course with hounds. 8. A prismatic play of colors. 9. To leave undone. 10. To proceed without hindrance or opposition. 11. The one and the other. 12. An Arabian military commander. 13. A cooper's tool. 14. An island. 15. To satisfy the appetite. 16. An air sung by a single voice. 17. A deep trench around the rampart of a castle. 18. One united to another by treaty. 19. A stroke with a whip. O. B. G.



THE ST. NICHOLAS PUZZLE.

DIVIDE this picture in four parts so that each part will contain three magazines and will be identical in shape and size. You must not draw through any of the magazines. If you solve the puzzle correctly you will have four pieces of paper of the same shape and size, and each piece will have on it three magazines in perfect condition. It is possible to solve the puzzle in two ways.

To show the solution, make a tracing of the picture on thin paper. This can be cut, and the four pieces inclosed with answers to other puzzles.

WORD-SQUARES.

I. 1. To imprint. 2. A number. 3. Tapestry. 4. Intended. 5. Nuisances.

II. 1. MUSICAL instruments. 2. To reverence. 3. A bird. 4. Conceited fellows. 5. Meaning. "WEE 3."

PRIMAL ACROSTIC.

ALL of the words described contain the same number of letters. When rightly guessed, and placed one below another in the order here given, the initial letters will spell the name of a famous man who was born on Christmas Day, two hundred and fifty years ago.

CROSS-WORDS: 1. A man noted for his wisdom. 2. To incite to action. 3. To wander without restraint or direction. 4. A celebrated Greek epic poem. 5. A number. 6. A projecting or sharp corner. 7. To do away with. 8. A man of coarse nature and manners. 9. Pertaining to the back. 10. A bird remarkable for its strength,

size, and graceful flight. 11. To diminish by constant loss. 12. A small drum used as an accompaniment to a fife. 13. One of several species of European thrushes. 14. One of a race that has no fixed location. M. O. G.

HOLLOW ST. ANDREW'S CROSS.



I. UPPER LEFT-HAND DIAMOND: 1. In shovel. 2. To indite. 3. A goddess. 4. A fruit of certain trees. 5. In shovel.

II. UPPER RIGHT-HAND DIAMOND: 1. In shovel. 2. An adversary. 3. To whistle. 4. To instigate. 5. In shovel.

III. LOWER LEFT-HAND DIAMOND: 1. In shovel. 2. A metal vessel. 3. A feminine name. 4. A short sleep. 5. In shovel.

IV. LOWER RIGHT-HAND DIAMOND: 1. In shovel. 2. To plan. 3. The nether world. 4. A wooden pin. 5. In shovel. A. P. C. A.

ant
to a
es.

To
In
vel.
In
vel.
cep.
vel.
pin.
A.



"ON NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THE MORNING."

DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY FRANK FRENCH.